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## **WORLD OUTLOOK. IDEAS AND THE ART OF WRITING**

### **1**

The press of our country has long been host to animated discussion of the part played by ideological principles in the creative arts and of the social stand of the artist. From time to time these debates die down, only to flare up again with fresh passion. The questions raised and the solutions found to them are a cause of general concern because of their importance to the development of the literature of the Soviet Union and of the other socialist countries and to the work of progressive contemporary writers. The discussions which arise from time to time of the relationship between the ideas and the creative principles in literature and of its role in our society or in the contemporary world have never been repetitive, for as life and literature develop new questions are raised and new angles exposed in the wide field to which these questions are relevant.

The necessity to back them up with a firm groundwork of theory is as pressing as ever. We must not forget, moreover, that the questions of the idea content of art and its social function are among the most important in the field of aesthetics. It is here that we find a watershed between contemporary realist literature and socialist aesthetics on the one hand and the modernist and decadent trends in art or formalist and intuitivist aesthetics on the other.

In our day there are many theorists, opponents of democratic and socialist culture, who attack an ideological message in literature and the social spirit which breathes in the work of the best writers of today. Asserting that the

and even total rejection of the part played by reason in the creation of the creative process, a rejection of a hierarchy of principles in art and a recognition of the unconscious as most and essential in the work of art, in contrast of art to the plastic. An unconscious part of the artist's work was actively asserted by Freud. For the first time enabled us to grasp the essence of the poet's creative activity.

The followers of Freud, Bergson and others are of course of the same ilk all say one and the same thing in different variants. According to Herbert Read, for example, the basic function of the artist lies in his "ability to materialize the instinctive activity of the deepest levels of his psyche". The French philosopher and neurobiologist Jacques Maritain claims that poetic intuition is born deep in the heart of the unconscious. "The poet is not aware of this intuition, on the contrary it is his most precious light and the primary rule of his virtue of art."<sup>1</sup> Similar opinions are expressed by many other champions of intuitionist aesthetics.

This defence of the irrational nature of artistic creation which leads to depreciation of the part played by ideas in

<sup>1</sup> S. Freud, *Complete Works* Vol. X, London, 1916, S. 76.

<sup>2</sup> J. Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, Washington, 1933, p. 91.





striving for. There are quite a few cases where the author never intended the radical or revolutionary conclusions that are drawn from the scenes and characters he created, but where it cannot be denied that objectively they carry this revolutionary content within them. There are also cases where talented writers strive to censure a certain social phenomenon, proceeding in this from an erroneous idea. And in spite of their desire to present it in a negative light, the positive features of whatever it is they are censuring, and the truth of life emerge to a greater or a lesser degree in their work.

This cannot be explained away merely as a contradictory world outlook or as conflict between artist and thinker. The creative designs of these writers may have an integrity of their own, insofar as in the formation of their conception and in its realization there is no inner wavering or duality. There is no doubt that what is felt here (and felt very strongly) is the influence of reality upon the writer, prompting him to change his original design so as to show what life is really like even when this leads to a clash with the idea from which he started. Some outstanding writers have written of the way in which the logic of life influences the process of writing like this. We will go further into the matter later on. For the moment we will simply emphasize that the theory of conflict between artist and thinker as a phenomenon characteristic of the historical development of literature is essentially unfounded and incapable of explaining complex literary problems.

Of course not all outstanding writers were great thinkers, though often the power of creative genius goes hand in hand with exceptional power of thought. However, if a writer is not a great thinker it by no means follows that he lacks a coherent world outlook or that he has no personal way of looking at life to distinguish him as an artist. On the other hand, the contradictory outlook of some great writers of the past does not mean that ideological views were not of considerable importance for the way they wrote.

Let us analyze the development of Tolstoy as a writer to both the strong and weak points of this great writer's "reason" and his "popular" Tolstoy's peasant



It is not enough simply to recognize the part played by the writer's world outlook in his artistic treatment of real life: that is only one side of the question, but there is another side to it, and a very important one, the way life influences the development of the writer's outlook, the process of creation, and the results of that process.

During the RAPP period much publicity was given to the notion that a work of literature is simply a set of ideas expressed in imagery, and, indeed, this idea is common enough even today. As a point of view it is, however, erroneous, first and foremost because it ignores one of the most important elements of artistic creation, the treatment of reality. Treating in essence from the "first" unstable character his maturity within him nothing more than an idea. Indeed, this is often what realist art is far from often a good one. To more than the mere formulated in advance simply a set of ideas, incarnation of an idea and expressiveness of artistic typification in nothing but a set of ideas, it loses all its artistic value.

The power of the realist that it reveals something that it reveals something Belinsky hit the nail on the head character "the realist" definition both the character and real life, and it is former.

The creation of a significant important discovery entirely

























the Soviet Union. It is a matter of principle that the Soviet Union should be able to represent itself in the world as it is, and not as it is perceived by the West. The Soviet Union is a great power, and it has the right to be treated as such. It is not a subject of the West, and it should not be treated as such. The Soviet Union is a sovereign state, and it has the right to determine its own destiny. It is not a puppet of the West, and it should not be treated as such. The Soviet Union is a member of the United Nations, and it has the right to be treated as such. It is not a pariah state, and it should not be treated as such. The Soviet Union is a great power, and it has the right to be treated as such. It is not a subject of the West, and it should not be treated as such. The Soviet Union is a sovereign state, and it has the right to determine its own destiny. It is not a puppet of the West, and it should not be treated as such. The Soviet Union is a member of the United Nations, and it has the right to be treated as such. It is not a pariah state, and it should not be treated as such.

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### 3

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the Soviet Union was at the height of its power, there was a widespread feeling in the West that the Soviet Union was a great power, and it had the right to be treated as such. This feeling was based on the fact that the Soviet Union was a member of the United Nations, and it had the right to be treated as such. It was not a pariah state, and it should not be treated as such. The Soviet Union was a great power, and it had the right to be treated as such. It was not a subject of the West, and it should not be treated as such. The Soviet Union was a sovereign state, and it had the right to determine its own destiny. It was not a puppet of the West, and it should not be treated as such. The Soviet Union was a member of the United Nations, and it had the right to be treated as such. It was not a pariah state, and it should not be treated as such.

At the same time, however, we cannot help noticing that the truthful representation of life was often seen in relation to the ideological principles of creative work. The authors often spoke of reconstructing a true picture of contemporary reality, of reflecting the truth of life in all its fullness, and much more rarely of the writer's social and which is so essential for his understanding and correct depiction of what is going on in the society around him. Not a few people consider that it is simple to embody the "life-truth" in literature. Given the will to do so, since truth is something self-evident, they think, it becomes obvious to

<sup>1</sup> V. G. Belinsky, op. cit., p. 314





usually. The surprising change is in regard to the novel and novelists. The novel is no longer considered as the genre which must give answers but rather as a problem, and a complex and enigmatic one. During the 1960s the literary movement of the novel was not so concerned with political or social commitment as before. The role of the novel today is placed in a perspective in which the writer is the person who is not to be taken too seriously. It is the writer who is the one who is not to be taken too seriously. It is the writer who is the one who is not to be taken too seriously. It is the writer who is the one who is not to be taken too seriously.

The writer's social model is of equal importance. Concerning these two functions of literature, there is a certain agreement of all we are used to. We are used to the idea that the writer is a person who is not to be taken too seriously. It is the writer who is the one who is not to be taken too seriously. It is the writer who is the one who is not to be taken too seriously.

We must add here that the notion of creative alienation, the understanding of the part played by artists, generalists, poets, etc., and the relationship they bear to reality, is manifestly well first and foremost an evaluation of the truth of facts, as the real and, in writing to write, the man comes of a literary work.

We know that in their time the 1st group put forward the idea that the literature of fiction was bound to be replaced by the literature of the fact. One of the basic virtues of a work of literature, according to them, was the complete authenticity of the content, they valued this rather than an artistic transformation of the raw material of reality. And as the defenders of the truth of facts to which we have been treated recently, the theme of "authenticity" was to the fore, going hand in hand with an undervaluation of the power and significance of artistic generalization. The ideas of the Leftists bore no fruit, and we have no reason to suppose that anything creative will come of an exaggerated respect for factual truth, where it conflicts with artistic synthesis.

Some "left" critics in France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy defend the view nowadays that belletristic nature they are incapable of expressing the needs of the age and should be replaced by reportage and journalism.



However, the creative assimilation of Marxist-Leninist theory is not a mechanical process of absorbing it as a simple matter of having packed in a few books and learned off by heart some formulas. The creative development of the writer is a continuous process which with his work and with the work he is faced with problems that crop up in life.

We cannot separate the writer's outlook, characteristic of his artistic interests, in short from his spiritual "equal of his age" in literature as by all true men of letters, and in its force as the criterion of the writer's aspirations. As a demand it personal interests, along with standing of different features of contemporary philosophical evolution and supposes that his aspirations will problems facing contemporary work. And all this he makes his own witness, so that it becomes a narrow ideological outlook to work of even very talented true spontaneity in their work, they soon find themselves out







One of the important questions raised by an investigation of the ideological elements in the poetic arts is that of the relationship between the artist's outlook and the outlook which he writes. In their discussion of this question, some critics dispute the part played by a progressive critical outlook among those who favour the theory of the "clash" or "inner conflict" between outlook and outlook.

This theory has been subjected to criticism in the past, but the criticism was not brought to its logical conclusion. The discussion exposed an over-simplified understanding of the relationship between art and reality, which to a certain extent shows the reason why the "clash" theory is so credited. And here we must add that a defence of it is sometimes part and parcel of criticism and conclusions of a far wider ideological nature.

This theory first saw the light in the group who put out the magazine *Literaturny front* in the middle of the 1920s, its followers claiming that the great writers of the past, Be Balzac, Gogol and Lev Tolstoy, whose views they considered reactionary, wrote works of genius in spite of these views and of their outlook. Misinterpreting Engels' famous remarks about Balzac, they announced that their theory









grave mistake. A writer's outlook is concerned not only with politics but encompasses questions as diverse as philosophy, society, history, ethics, aesthetics, the relationship between classes, an awareness of nature, the problem of understanding itself and the life of the individual in society, etc. And often a writer's political views are totally inconsistent with his understanding and exposition of the processes of life, of social relations and historical events. It is their reduction of his outlook as a whole to his political views that allows the "in-spite-of-ists" (and the "because-of-ists" as well) to make their effortless "transformations" of the classics.

As we have already said, this theory is not totally a thing of the past. It has its champions to this day, although their ranks have thinned considerably, and often reappears as an opposition set up between the wider significance of artistic generalisations and the ideological element in poetic arts which is seen as something transitory or topical. But they support their arguments by citing essentially the same authors as their forerunners. It is therefore reasonable to demonstrate how wrong contemporary "in-spite-of-ists" are in their attempts to justify their views by recalling the same writers, to Tolstoy, Gogol and Balzac. We have already dealt.

The idea that Gogol's views were "reaction and through" is obviously a myth. In his "Another Anti-Democratic Campaign" Lenin, in the wide distribution of democratic literature, the revolution of 1905 and adds that this is brimming with "Belinsky and C. . . .", as indeed endeared these authors, as indeed person in Russia.

Pointing out the difference between the Belinsky and Gogol, not only the of the latter's work of the progressive in the height of his existence of "Sel

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected*







Andreyev of this life depicted as nothing more than a search of his own unconscious world in this way.

His chief source of patriarchal principles upon a novel whose most striking features are devoted to reflection of the struggle against these principles and in its depiction of the disharmonies and conflicts that arise in the village after the abolition of serfdom. The author's attraction for the old and his false idealization of the patriarchal communal system is the revealed in informants and artistic value and the same thing happened with the works of other Symbolists.

The period leading up to 1905 when the revolutionary movement was growing in Russia, was reflected in the stories, novellas and plays of Lev Nikolaeovich Andreyev like "Red Laughter", "The Story of Seven Hangings" and "The Governor". After the wave of revolutionary feeling was dampened down Andreyev wrote works rendering pessimism and a lack of faith in the creative strength of man and the possibility of changing society for the better. Such was his play *King Hunger* (1906).

As an echo of the revolutionary events that had recently taken place, it is an attempt to sum up what happened. Making full use of symbolic characters (Death, King Hunger, Time, and so on), Andreyev depicts the revolt of the hungry and dispossessed against the power of the rich and well-fed. The action takes place mostly in crowd scenes depicting a rabble that is driven by its lower instincts and passions, with the occasional appearance of some episodic figures personifying some facet of life.





enough to make that work inferior or faulty. The whole question hinges upon the place occupied by this idea in the overall plan and structure of the work, whether it conditions the author's overall conception or occupies a relatively secondary place in the book, and whether this idea determines the way in which life is depicted or whether the two are in conflict, and all these points must be looked at in the context of specific works. We must first of all determine the relationship between the false idea and the overall conception of the work and the feelings underlying it, its correlation with the method in which reality is reflected.

In Ostrovsky's plays *Do Not Get into the Wrong Sledge* and *Poverty Is No Crime* the old mores are to a certain extent idealised. Chernyshevsky noted this in his day, pointing out that in *Poverty Is No Crime* Ostrovsky gives us "an apotheosis of the old mores, which he imagines to have survived in certain sections of the merchant classes, and this is why he tries to lay stress on all their poetic qualities".<sup>1</sup> We would be wrong, however, to suppose that the idealisation of the old ways in these two plays totally determines their content, especially that of *Poverty Is No Crime*. For this is the play in which Ostrovsky gives us the striking character of Korthinov, a sort of "bourgeois gentleman" and self-satisfied "European" ways and fashions while trampling on the human dignity of his dependents. In the same play Ostrovsky also gives us Ilyubim Iortsov, a man who has known the vicissitudes of fate and who, untouched by prejudice is a champion of honour and conscience and the right to one's own feelings. There are also other characters who are lively and interesting human types, like Gordi Tortsov, Pelagea Egorovna and Mitya.

Let us now turn to Dostoyevsky. One of the main themes of his novel *The Adolescent* is the social chaos, decay and estrangement of the people. "Decay is everywhere," wrote the author in his first notes to the novel, "for we are all

<sup>1</sup> N. G. Chernyshevsky *Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p. 249 (in Russian).



Many great writers relate how they changed their conception of a work, subordinating the artist to its own ends and forcing him to change already thought out along with his ideas on what would be like.

While he worked on *Resurrection* Tolstoy was changing both his characters and his situation. For instance, he had meant it to end with Levin marrying Nekhludov and them leaving for England. He sensed, however, that this ending was not in the spirit of the events with the characters as he had depicted. He rejected the idea. "An artist is an artist because he sees things not as he wants them to be,"<sup>1</sup> saying his words on his lips.

Tolstoy wrote to one of his correspondents: "You create your imaginary persons, and give us them in the form of imagery; they themselves determine the character so that the dénouement will accord as a function of character and situation."

As for Flaubert, he put in many years of exhausting work on *Madame Bovary*. In his first drafts, although they were not as good as the final version, he achieved his heroine as we see her in the first versions it was her carnal side that was treated, and it was only later that he put the emphasis on her complex psychology. In the novel he discovered for his characters and their behaviour.

Describing the way Walter Scott wrote, Balzac once wrote: "Walter Scott's first drafts, although they were not as good as the final version, the composition as it changed because of character-development of his heroes. While making flesh the vivants starts by putting mentally on

<sup>1</sup> L. N. Tolstoy, *Complete Works*, Vol. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 63, p. 424.



are speaking of the divergence between his ideological outlook and the results of his labours, a divergence which can occur even in the work of writers of a progressive bent.

The artistic generalisations in Turgenev's *Rudin*, *On the Eve* and *Fathers and Sons* are broader than the social and political views upon which they are based, and not only broader, but also somewhat contradictory to these views. To this day we come across obstinate efforts to equate Turgenev's characters with his political views and reduce both to a common denominator. But these attempts, with the vulgarised sociology which they express, have always come to nothing for they involve disparagement of the objective significance of Turgenev's marvellous characters.

In his political views Turgenev was, as we all know, a liberal. His outlook as a whole was a complex one, with a progressive attitude to many things. As Dobrolyubov wrote of him: "He very soon divined the new requirements, the new ideas that were permeating the public mind, and in his works he, as a rule, devoted (as much as circumstances would permit) attention to the question that was about to come up next and which was already beginning vaguely to stir society."<sup>1</sup> This is a very good way of describing Turgenev's search as an artist, and also underlines the fact that Turgenev's artistic generalisations cannot be "brought into line" with his political views. There are essential differences between them, which come out in the fact that his characters, for instance those in *On the Eve* and *Fathers and Sons*, express objectively the inevitable triumph of those new life-principles and forms of social behaviour to which the author did not himself subscribe. In his analysis of *On the Eve* Dobrolyubov notes that "we see here the irrefutable thrust of the normal course of social and intellectual life which the author's own ideas and imagination could not resist."<sup>2</sup> The same may be said of *Fathers and Sons*.

<sup>1</sup> N. Dobrolyubov, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Moscow, 1936, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> N. Dobrolyubov, *Collected Works in 9 volumes*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1963, p. 94 (in Russian).



things he knew, about the stagnation and inertia that he had seen in various spheres of life since his childhood, especially on the estates of the gentry. This stagnation he saw as a great social evil, and in describing the essence of Oblomov he stated that his hero was the "embodiment of sleep, stagnation and motionless, moribund life, *creeping from day to day*"<sup>1</sup>. What he was not clearly aware of, however, was that a moribund life is the product of a moribund system.

As step by step he follows through the formation of Oblomov's character and his behaviour, the writer gives us a vivid account of the conditions in which his hero grew up and the social atmosphere which influenced him. His picture of relationships and circumstances and his profound expression of the logic of life and the way in which it develops enabled Goncharov to show objectively that the social system which produced Oblomov and *Oblomovskchina* was doomed.

The complex of relationships between the artist's outlook, reality, ideology, creative conceptions and artistic generalisations cannot be placed in any simple, easily assimilated scheme. Art as we see it in practice and the historical experience of world literature show the variety of ways in which outlook, artistic method and the process of creation interact. To ignore this diversity would be to negate the possibility of a systematic study of literature.

Those who would pass themselves off as innovators to cast doubt upon the ideological basis of literature discover nothing new. They merely follow bourgeois idealist aesthetics, whether by proclaiming the neutrality of art or by championing the strictest adherence to what they see as the life-truth. True art, that which delights and troubles, giving birth to passions and calling us into the future, always was and will be the art of great and vivid ideas, for only thus can art fully express life-truths in all their profundity.

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<sup>1</sup> I. A. Goncharov, *Collected Works*, Vol. R, Moscow, 1953, p. 78 (Russian).





always ask ourselves is 'Well, and what kind of a man are you? What makes you different from the people I know and what can you tell me that I didn't know before about how we ought to look at life?' And if it is a writer we know of old, then the question is not 'Who are you?' but 'Well, now what's new? From which side will you explain life to me this time?'<sup>1</sup>

Turgenev had something slightly different to say about the characteristics of the true artist. "The important thing for a literary — or, I should say for any talent, is what I would call *one's own voice*. Yes, the important thing is to have *one's own voice*. One needs a living melody of *one's own* notes, notes that not everyone has at his command ... in order to say what you have to say just so or to hit just the right note, you must have the right vocal apparatus, like the birds.... This is, in essence, the distinguishing mark of a lively, original talent."<sup>2</sup>

The idea of "having one's own voice" and that of new ways of shedding light on our life in the work of a talented writer are very closely related. It is when he has acquired "his own voice" that the writer will say something new, and the stronger this "voice", the livelier the creative personality of the realist artist, the more significant his contribution to art. "There are enough mineral deposits, enough raw material," wrote the Armenian writer Derenik Demirchian, "in every one of us. You must bring them forth and work them over rather than make use of what others before you have prepared . . . A poor thing, but mine own — that is what is of value in literature and this is where the reader finds his interest."

By bringing something of his "own" to literature the talented writer contributes to our common heritage and to the spiritual treasures produced by his nation. The importance of the artistic personality lies not simply in originality as such but in that originality which leads to the creation of masterpieces that are of value to all. "One's own" acquires

<sup>1</sup> L. N. Tolstoy, *Complete Works*, Vol. 30, p. 19 (in Russian)

<sup>2</sup> *Russian Writers on Literary Craft*, Vol. 21, Leningrad, 1955, pp. 712, 713 (in Russian)



tion of splashes of colour are capable of revealing the essence of an object. The significance of the artistic personality in this "metaphysical" art is severely limited. For the essence of the subject is captured without reference to any particular aspect of the artist's creative self.

This apology for the artist's increasing facelessness reflects the realities of capitalist art. The artist's personality "dissolves" not only in abstract art, pop-art, op-art and other movements in the visual arts, it is clear in literature too, usually disguised as a way of overcoming the subjectivity of the art of previous stages in its evolution.

This desire to make works of literature strictly objective and impersonal is often to be seen in the literary experiments of many movements, including that of the "nouveau roman", where any obvious expression of the creative "self" is banished. The object of the writer's labours is not man and society but a depiction of external circumstances, objects, physical states and dissociated events, all aimed at giving the impression of an independent reality.

However, this apparently decisive negation of everything personal leads to artistic subjectivism. Robbe-Grillet, one of the founders of the "nouveau roman", has admitted that his novels, though outwardly objective, are in fact "the most subjective in the world". As the French writer and critic Bernard Pingaud notes, for the writers of the "nouveau roman" the world loses its neutrality, anonymity and general reality; it is reorganised around the writer's point of view and finally ceases to be the real world we all know, becoming a separate one built on subjective lines, a world in which all the objects, places and people are interconnected, symbolising in their different ways one *idée fixe*. This is not the world seen by the writer; it is a world which he needs, a world at one and the same time both possible and necessary for him.

This is equally true of the so-called "art of the absurd". Ionesco and Beckett in drama, like their counterparts in the other arts, are convinced that they have got to the essence of things when they declare that life is absurd, a senseless chaos determined only by the idea of death. However impressive works seem to their admirers, what they express is the



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always been dynamic. I have always written for those who are forging ahead because I have always forged ahead myself. Life for me would be meaningless if it were a constant movement forward."<sup>1</sup>

One of the inherent features of the writer's craft as Vladimir Kozlovsky has pointed out, is its constant orientation towards the reader or listener and the way they are affected by a work of art. He strongly advised young writers to develop a feeling for those for whom they are writing.

We were given words not for our own satisfaction but to embody and transmit to others those thoughts and feelings or those truths and inspirations which are ours. This is vitally linked with the very nature of the word that what is suppressed instead of being transmitted or shared is choked and diminished. A writer must have a constant feeling for others and be constantly testing (though not in the moment of creation) his thoughts, feelings and images asking himself whether they will spring to life for the reader and form the latter's thoughts, feelings and images. And he must refine his words to the point where they are capable of this (be it at once or with the passage of time—that is another question). Then his artistic ability will grow, gaining in life and strength. If he is concerned only with satisfying himself in self-enclosed isolation, he will find his ability whittled away, withering and losing life and strength or being reduced to a one-sided, hermetically sealed frame of mind that is of interest purely as something unusual and exotic."<sup>2</sup>

The relationship between writer and reader changes through the ages. The writers of the past were faced with the social differentiation of their readership, with its different tastes, and they were concerned with winning the latter's friendship and setting up a wide, democratic circle of readers. In practice the author often writes not only for the existing, but also for a potential, "ideal" reader.

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<sup>1</sup> Romain Rolland *Quinze ans de combat (1919-1934)*, Paris, MCMXXXV pp. 237-38.

<sup>2</sup> *Russian Writers on Literary Craft*, Vol. 3, pp. 653-54.





foremost in indifference to life and to those about him, for he who is indifferent to that which is close and immediate will be no less a stranger to that which is further off, though it is of course just as true that the artist is not giving off his best if he takes what is superficial and "topical" for fundamental values and does not penetrate to the heart of the processes that take place in life.

The true artist's connection with contemporary reality manifests itself not in depiction of the familiar features of his time but in his artistic discoveries which take the reader by surprise with their freshness, impressing him and convincing him totally with their emotional strength, and the way they stimulate him to thought and understanding of life and of his own self. If these discoveries are truly significant they will affect the lives of many generations. However, his creations are tested by time, and only time can give the final verdict on their profundity and significance.

The experience of history shows that there is no justification for making a distinction between great artistic advances and the time in which they were made, viewing the two completely separately. The ideas of Jean-Paul Sartre on this subject are not without interest:

"It is true that, for history, only talent is important. But I have not yet entered history, and I do not know how I will enter it: perhaps alone, perhaps in an anonymous crowd, perhaps as one of those names that one finds in the notes of textbooks on literature. In any case, I shall not worry about the judgments that the future may pronounce upon my work, because there is nothing I can do about them. Art cannot be reduced to a dialogue with dead men and men as yet unborn."<sup>1</sup>

In each human heart, as Sartre goes on to say, lives a thirst for the absolute. But must we seek the absolute only at a distance? It is beside us and among us, and we create it for ourselves. Our feelings and actions have an absolute quality.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "We Write for Our Own Time", *The Creative Union. Modern European Writers on Their Art*, edited by Haskell M. and Herman Salinger, New York, 1960, p. 187.

simply by virtue of existing. In this sense time, *time*, is absolute, the historical period in which we live with its concrete human relationships, its contradictions and aspirations. But times will change, and then the relativity of the aspirations of past epochs and their mistakes will become clear. Time and the period are always right while they exist and always mistaken once they have passed. But the artist's works carry within them the absolute truth of their time.

Thus we must write for our time, as the great writers did," says Sartre. "But this does not imply that we must shut ourselves up in it. To write for our time does not mean to reflect it passively. It means that we must will to maintain it or change it, therefore, go beyond it toward the future, and it is this effort to change it which establishes us most deeply in it, for it can never be reduced to a dead mass of tools and customs. It is in flux, it perpetually goes beyond itself, in it the concrete present and the living future of all the men who compose it exactly coincide."<sup>1</sup>

The links between different periods preserve and demonstrate the communicative power of the works of great writers. Their creative advances, made as a result of penetrating deep into the life of their age, are the bedrock upon which they build their communication with readers of future generations.

2

As we have seen, contemporary art theorists are wont to deny the role of the artist's personality, proceeding from various premises and coming to the same conclusion. Some of them while admitting that the creative personality is a contributory factor in the evolution of literature, either differentiate sharply between it and the historical facts of the artist's personality as a man, or else disclaim that it can be of any significance whatsoever in our research into the meaning of his work. The German scholar Wolfgang Kayser

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-92.

writes, for instance, that "the poetic personality of a Dante or an Ariosto is something quite different from their personality in life, with nothing identical or mutually dependent about the two"<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that it is just as wrong wholly to separate the creative personality and the artist's historical personality as a man as it is to identify them completely. They are neither separate nor identical, and the relationship between them varies. Not everything in the artist's personality as a man finds expression in his work, while not even thing that goes to make up his creative self corresponds straightforwardly with something in his personal life.

The history of literature is full of cases where there is a divergence between the events of the life of a writer, his psychological make-up and his work. This was remarked upon by Balzac in his time. He wrote: "Petrarch, Lord Byron, Hoffmann and Voltaire were men whose lives bore the stamp of their work, but Rabelais, himself a man of moderation, led a life very different from the excesses of his style and the characters in his book. He sang the praises of young wine while drinking only water, just as Brillat-Savarin sang the praises of plenty while eating very little."

The same was true of the most original contemporary author of which Britain can boast: the curate Maugham who gave us *Ere, Malmuth and Bertram*. He was vain, gallant and loved women, and entertaining as he did such frightful ideas in the evenings he became a lady-killer and a dandy. And the same can be said of Baudouin whose gentle, refined conversations did not correspond with the insolent nature of his verse.<sup>2</sup> We could give other examples to illustrate the phenomenon noted by Balzac. A. A. Fét, a delicate house, the inspired poet of love, nature and beauty, whose works are obviously far removed from the everyday, was in fact a parsimonious man of property. And the artistic personality of Fyodor Dostoevsky with his love for mystery and the

<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Iser: *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk. Eine Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft*, Berlin 1970, S. 270.

<sup>2</sup> *La Poésie de Maugham, Roman philosophique*, Par M. de Balzac, 1<sup>er</sup> volume, Bruxelles 1851, Préface p. 6.



method since the life-forms and more and more person-  
alities are

It is different because we can see the gap between the  
artist's creative personality and his life-personality in the  
poetry of the romantic. This degree of contrast is  
characteristic not only of the individual poet but a whole  
epoch and of the whole of life. The poet's world of ideas  
stands as an obstacle for the most part toward the direct  
expression and statement of the individual in other words  
toward his self. But this self is not what he really is but  
a self that has been in the sphere of imagination and in which his  
feelings were as one was in another environment with its  
excesses and contrasts with a sort of unreality. For  
reasons of romantic poetry the poet's self could not but be  
fundamentally different from the everyday "Person" of the  
poet's and personality in life were often two very  
different things though they remained related.

In many instances writers of the 19th Century, like  
Goethe and Schopenhauer in many of his works, to name but a  
few we see a strong artistic personality that has mastered  
the situations of life. In these works the poet's world  
the idea of liberty, the struggle against social evils and the  
defense of the rights of a man take on a strong "person"  
character. The highly emotional, passionate and even  
orientated qualities of their work are closely related both  
their personalities in life and to the social environment  
which they lived and worked.

As we can see the creative self of the romantic poet  
makes its own out of all aspects of everyday life, human  
relationships and the artist's life-personality. In his self-  
expression and his attitude to the world around him it  
is upon his own artistic credo that the romantic poet  
like the representatives of other literary schools is depend-  
ent.

As for realist art, it not only gives space for the creative  
personality to develop but also closes the gap between the  
artist's life-personality and the chief features of his work.  
Since his orientation is towards reality, he brings more  
sphere of art and literature many things that were before  
regarded as insignificant, uninteresting and unworthy of art.



the dampening down of the writer's creative word.

It is evident enough that artistic creation is influenced not simply by what has been seen but rather by what has been understood and experienced, what has troubled the artist and become a part of his spiritual self. Ibsen wrote that we must "distinguish clearly between what has been experienced and what has simply been lived through, for only the first can serve as the foundation of art." Many other writers have stressed the same thing. "To write a novel," noted Dostoevsky, "there must be one or more strong impressions that the author has really experienced to the depth of his being."<sup>1</sup> Everything that spills out into the imagery of art carries the mark of the writer's preoccupations, passions and feelings. "In every character," writes Valentin Katayev,

there is a part of the soul of the artist who created him. It is impossible simply to think up a hero, the writer must 'enter' him and give him something of his own heart and soul, only then is it easy to write. The author never says: 'I'm going to write about Sanka or Mitya.' No, he has to become Sanka or Mitya, enter their lives as though they were his own and transmigrate himself into the character he has imagined. This is very difficult, and here the writer moves into the sphere of the actor, except that for the actor it is much simpler: someone has written his part for him, and every actor has his own part. But the writer, in creating his characters, himself takes on the flesh of each one in turn."<sup>2</sup> And in this transmigration, the writer's understanding and his experience are naturally one and the same thing.

Here we should make mention of the inconsistency that is often to be found between the material that the writer has stored up and the depth at which he has experienced it. The spiritual experience of an artist is by no means proportional to the number of significant things to which he has been witness, so that it is hard to see any justification for the oft-expressed idea that "a writer of stature means a life on a large scale." Sometimes this is the case, but often it is not. The biographies of Gogol, Ostrovsky, Chekhov and many

<sup>1</sup> *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 77, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Valentin Katayev, *Various Notes*, Moscow, 1970, p. 21.





literature. Art without invention<sup>1</sup> writes Gorky "is impotently, it could not exist".<sup>2</sup>

In a letter to a scholar stating his work on Soviet literature Konstantin Fedin declared "In most cases the latter as such is nothing more than a fakturn for what we call the imagination. It seems to me that you overrate the writer's factual understanding as compared with his function as an invention. You belittle the faculty of fantasy. As a writer who has just finished the 1,500 pages of an enormous double novel I can say that the ratio of imagination to 'facts' is 99:2. Of course, I always knew plenty of facts about what life was like in the Russia of 1910 and 1919 but only by taking off from them into the 'space' of the imagination could I invent people whom I had never seen or met but of whose existence there could be no doubt."<sup>3</sup> Fedin is of course exaggerated slightly to prove his point, but his words are of great interest in themselves.

Konstantin Paustovsky wrote with great feeling on the creative imagination in *The Golden Rose*.

"It was imagination that created the law of gravity, the old tale of Tristan and Isolde, the splitting of the atom, the Admiralty building in Leningrad, Levitan's *Golden Autumn*, the *Moscow*, the radio, electric light, Prince Hamlet, the theory of relativity and the film *Bambi*. Human thought without imagination is barren, as is imagination without reality."<sup>4</sup>

These defences of the creative imagination are a decent refutation of all that is faceless, dull and naturalistic. Unimpaired descriptiveness often finds champions who claim to be fighting for authenticity and verisimilitude, and contrast the latter with artificiality and invention. We know very well, however, that vividness of imagery, even that achieved through hyperbole, is of far greater verisimilitude

<sup>1</sup> M. Gorky *Collected Works* in 30 volumes, Vol. 24, p. 330 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> K. Fedin, *Writer, Art and Time*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 509-10 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> K. Paustovsky *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1957, p. 625 (in Russian).



enthalls the reader with the strength and profound uncertainty of its author and the truth of her feelings, thoughts and observations.

It does not often happen that subjectivism totally invades the work of talented writers, if it should do so, the writer would lose the fundamental qualities of an artist. It does happen, though, that writers of great talent display it in one form or another, either in their view of the development of society or in their evaluation of some aspect of life, in the way they describe the great events of their age or the psychological make-up of their contemporaries. It is hard to determine for the artist himself the point at which subjectivity becomes subjectivism and healthy creative imagination becomes illusory fantasising, but a close reading and analysis of any work of literature will show that the difference between the two is easily distinguishable in the work itself.

Not long ago there were heated debates about "self-expression" and the embodiment of wide-ranging social and political themes in poetry. Some poets and critics viewed "self-expression" as an escape into the closed circle of personal feelings, and saw the opposite virtue of this vice in the social orientation, which they regarded as the most important basis for socialist literature. The champions of "self-expression", on the other hand, stressed its importance and rightful place in poetry and pointed out that the embodiment of social and political themes and motives without the poet's personal attitude to his subject would mean degeneration to mere rhetoric.

A negative attitude to "self-expression" is unfounded. Poetry never existed without it and is dependent upon it to this day, since without the expression of the creative self none of the forms of contemporary literature could have ever been brought about. To set up as opposites "self-expression" and "social orientation" is just as unfounded, for "self-expression" as often as not implies the latter quality as well, which is quite natural for a socialist art. Social ideas and themes are an integral part of the creative conceptions and creative self of our artists. But socialist art is, as we  
no stranger to philosophical reflection, Nature poetry



modern society would be. Sometimes it does and sometimes it does not as a result of fundamental changes and developments. The thing relevant to it "even depends on a comparison between literature and its that of the past. It is not enough to measure the development of critical value in France and England is some about his new of political changes in the life of society at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries when one social order is replaced by another. These changes affected such different values of life and values of society and called for understanding of the new social and human relations that the bourgeois system brought with it. They also showed discrepancies for which that system was in decline.

In Russia, as we know, critical realism developed in a different way, reflecting the aspirations of many writers that profound changes would be brought about in the social system. For a time realism caused a genuine romanticism which in its own way reflected both events in society and the desire for personal and social freedom.

Some scholars postulate that the formation and development of these common ideas is the essence of what we call the "literary process." They see the interest in work of a great writer in a historical light, that of the "typical" socio-aesthetic views that are expressed in it. This point of view has given rise to numerous attempts to write a history of literature that does not contain any names, for weights given not to separate artistic personalities but to the development of literature, the "literary process" as a whole and what goes on within it. It is not surprising that nothing of any significance has ever come of such efforts, for the description of the development of literature is in no way made easier by ignoring the writer as a creative individual.

Another conclusion to which this idea (that only what writers have in common characterises the basic content of the literary process) can lead is that what we should study is first and foremost literary movements and schools. According to Professor Sokolov, for instance, we should see the cornerstones of the literary process in literary schools and movements (the two are interchangeable) as ideological and artistic unions of more or less important groups of writers. It



One can, for instance, disagree with equating literature to language; but there is no disputing that an explanation of style as something that appears simultaneously in different art-forms would not have any clarity without encompassing the idea of the "language" of art. If this side of art is not taken into account even the most tempting conceptions of style remain unconvincing for the basic reason that "expression" is one of the most important elements of all styles, however different. But in the vast majority of "universal" interpretations of style, including those noted above, the "language" of art and of literature in particular would seem to be ignored as something obstructing this "universality". Avoiding difficulties, however, was never a help in solving a problem.

As for the general lines along which style develops, there seems to be every reason to speak of "baroque" or "classicism" as movements which were expressed in various art-forms. But was there such a style, for instance, as "an empire" in art or literature? Or what is the architectural equivalent of the romanticism or critical realism which gained such ground in literature? Such "inconsequences" are many.

The thesis that style in the broadest sense of the word includes the method in which the writer works can lead to much vagueness, especially when we come to study actual works. If we see the artist's method in the usual way, as the basic artistic principles embodied in works of art, then we are faced with the question of what are the distinguishing features of that which taken together we call "style" and of which only a part is composed from these basic artistic principles. In essence, there is no cut-and-dried answer to this question. To say that style is a union of the artist's outlook and his creative method is not enough to define the specific nature of style and also leaves unclear the part played by the expressive and descriptive means available to art in this combination.

Moreover, the thesis put forward by the champions of the "universal" view presupposes that the relationship between method and style will be identical in different art forms. It is by no means that simple. Take, for instance, the applied art





us to use it in our definition of style, just as there is no point in referring to specific features of content and form which, according to some scholars, go to make up the style of particular artists and of whole movements. Each great work of literature has, in essence, its specific content and form. This is quite clear. Less easy to determine are the principles behind what are particular works of literature taken as a whole, but unless we can do so there is no point in making statements about that particular quality which is the first sign of style.

The idea that style is the synthesis of the elements of artistic form is also a doubtful one. The basic accusation against those who hold this theory is that they see form as the only thing giving its unity to a work or to all the works of a writer, as though the other principles underlying the inner unity of works of literature were of no importance at all.

The supporters of this theory may object and say that they are speaking not simply of form, but of what they have called content-expressive form. And that is indeed the case. But the point is that the form of a true work of art is always expressive of content, even when it does not express any clear-cut ideas, since the refusal to express an idea is also an idea. The objection that what we are dealing with is the form which expresses content changes nothing, for form is still being separated off from the other principles behind the work.

"We must not forget," my opponents will pursue, "that the definition of style lays stress on the dominant role of artistic form as the organising force behind the work." And this is indeed a point of importance. But it is not yet clear how this dominant principle comes into being and whether it is an integral factor in artistic form itself. If its source is, as it must be, somewhere outside form, then it can be included in our definition of style only when it is more determinative than in this association with form. And then we will see how inadequate this idea of content-expressive form is to explain the nature of style.

The reader has probably decided that this is the place for the author to tell us what he himself understands by style and to give us a definition which in its turn will be subjected to the same criticism as all the others. Of course the author cannot escape the task of defining the essence of style although he does not consider that the problems existing in this sphere can be reduced merely to the search for a definitive formula, however fortunate.

Before, however, we attempt to describe the particularities of style we must take a closer look at one important question: the source and character of that literary unit which forms a part of all definitions of style. On what basis is this unit based?

The most usual explanation is that in his style the writer's artistic personality is expressed, along with his overall view of life. It is, of course, true that the writer's personality, being out in different ways in his works, is especially evident in his style. But a creative personality may turn to a number of means of embodying his view of life in artistic images. In writers of outstanding personality we can find several different styles. After the change in his views, Lev Tolstoy wrote almost simultaneously the psychological satire *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and folk stories salient for their down-to-earth and didactic qualities. These two styles are as different from each other as both are from the novels and stories of the 1850s-1870s.

In his last period Tolstoy discovered a new style in *Resurrection* and the stories *The Devil* and *Father Sergius*, which retained features of that in which he had written before the change. In July 1898, he wrote to Chertkov: "I wrote three stories: *Intenev* (*The Devil*—M. Kh.), *Resurrection* and *Father Sergius*. They are written in my old style of which I no longer approve. But if I keep changing them I am not satisfied, then they will never be finished. But if they are not what I now demand of art, that it should be accessible to all, there is at least nothing harmful in these

stories and they might even be of use...."<sup>1</sup> Although close to *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, *Resurrection* is in fact written in a style somewhat different from them.

And if we compare *The Power of Darkness*, written for a popular audience, with *The Living Corpse*, which also has something of the "old style", we will see that in his dramatic too Tolstoy wrote in different styles towards the end of his life; here too we may speak of "several styles" Although they are, of course, related, it would be too great a liberty taken with the text to see these works as the products of one writing style. Whatever the period and whatever the work, of course, Tolstoy is still Tolstoy, and while his style changes from work to work, he had series of works written in a single style like the cycle of stories he wrote for the people to read.

Tolstoy is not the only writer with many sides to his style. We could also mention Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov or Shevchenko. The latter's work was at first full of romanticism. In his early works he gave romantic expression to the theme of social inequality ("Katerina") and to heroic poems, like "Taras' Night", "Gamaleya" and "Gaidamak". With his realism came a new style, characterised by a combination of social protest, satire and the identification of his hero with the fate of his people. And his stories have a special place in his work, because of the unique way in which they depict the situations that have a decisive influence on the formation of the individual.

The change to a new style is often the result of a writer's artistic evolution and changes in his view of life and artistic method. So it was with Shevchenko. The unique quality of his stories, however, cannot be explained away so simply here the reasons for a change in style were different. Lermontov, for instance, continued to work on *The Demon* even while he was writing *A Hero of Our Time*, although *The Demon* was of a very different style being one of the author's romantic works.

Along with the artist's outlook, the subject itself has an important part to play in the formation of his style and the conflicts that are the moving force behind the work. The

<sup>1</sup> L. N. Tolstoy, *Complete Works*, Vol. 88, p. 106 (in Russian).



changes in a style that has already been formed, which sometimes the results of the search prompted by fresh material are but an episode in the career of a writer and are not further developed, but sometimes it happens that something new in life brings about the appearance of something equally new in the world of style.

Vera Panova notes the living link between the creative and reality. "It is a great mistake to think," she writes, "that if a writer is talented he can write about anything at all. Without the material that he has felt through, moment by moment, and made truly his own, the writer's talent is an empty sound, a trifle of no social value and an unmaterialised abstraction."<sup>1</sup>

Of even more importance than the raw material of life is the formation of a style is the inner orientation towards the reader which is there, consciously or unconsciously throughout the process of creation. We have already spoken of the reader in connection with the "communicativeness" of art, and now we return to him in the context of style. For the talented artist, having his reader in mind does not mean limits imposed upon what he conceives and searches for in his work, but an awareness of the effectiveness at which he aims in what he writes. "From my experience as a writer," wrote Alexei Tolstoy, "I know that the message and quality of what I write depend upon the first picture I have in mind of my reader. The reader, a generalised being created from my imagination, experience and knowledge, emerges together with the theme of the work. The type of reader and the writer's attitude to him decide the form and the specific gravity, as it were, of the latter's work. The reader is a contributory factor to the work of art."<sup>2</sup>

A similar idea is expressed by the Serbian writer Ivan Lalić. "His shadow [the reader's — *M' Kā*] stands looking over the writer's shoulder as he sits in front of a clean sheet of paper, and he is present even when the latter is unwilling to admit this presence. This reader leaves his invisible but

<sup>1</sup> V. Panova "The Artist's Cares", *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 3rd October 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Alexei Tolstoy on Literature, Moscow, 1963, pp. 37-38 (see also).



elements of style are used by the artist not only to express his view of the world but to express it in the most effective way he can.

Every talented writer seeks new ways to embody his ideas and images that will make them interesting to his reader. And this means that the writer works at his style to perfect it. A short definition of this would sound something like this: *style should be defined as the means of expressing an imaginative, perceived view of the world around us, the means of communicating and enthralling the reader.*

Obviously, "expression" and aesthetic effect are not separate things, but merely two different sides of the same coin. Style convinces by conveying the qualities of things, the events that take place in life and people's characters. A profound aesthetic effect is closely related to the way in which the characteristics of the subject are depicted. And here we should note the essential difference between "enthralling" and merely "entertaining". Any true work of art enthralls, while entertainment is to be found in certain types of book that are far from works of art. And while "entertainingness" is a quality instilled through features of the work bereft of any significant literary content, the "enthrallingness" of a true work of art is not something exterior like this to its essence, a kind of ornament, but one of its integral qualities. And it is in this style that this is most clearly expressed. Galsworthy was not mistaken when he pointed out that style is the writer's ability to remove the barriers between the reader and himself, and its highest achievement is when they are in close unity.

The unity of means of expression and aesthetic effect does not mean that the former determines the degree of the latter. As Tolstoy wrote in his diary (20th December, 1897): "Scylla and Charybdis for the writer, it's either easy to grasp but shallow, or else it's written in a style that seems lofty and original but is impossible to understand."<sup>1</sup> It often happens that a writer concentrates all his efforts on making his ideas and images clear without taking into account the aesthetic effect that his work is going to have.

<sup>1</sup> L. N. Tolstoy, *op. cit.*, Vol. 51, p. 26.





together and under the influence of some sort of not prehensible black magic, senseless mumbling by the author himself, take on all the signs of life and seem to, albeit not, yet, in the flesh."<sup>1</sup>

Not simply is style formed under the influence of the subject, the raw material of reality, but in its turn it serves itself to organise this material. At one and the same time style depicts the qualities of the latter and has a strong influence on the writer's aesthetic perception of it. The subject, taken broadly, is usually a complex one, but one to which attracts the artist in that it allows him to describe the movement of life and the inner world of man. A true master is distinguished by his ability to collate and digest his material, sorting the essential from the superficial and moulding it to his own ends. Through his style he has to blend the overall idea of the work with the different elements existing side by side in the raw material that is his subject.

In the work of different writers we see different relationships between subject and style (as an element of structure) as they seek new ways of expression and as the art of literature evolves. When he had finished *Jean-Christophe*, a work of epic and philosophical vein with considerable elements of tragedy, Romain Rolland wrote *Colas Breugnot*, a novella diffused with *joie de vivre*, a story of sharp and profound humour in the form of a folk-tale. "The readers of *Jean-Christophe*," remarked Rolland in the foreword to *Colas Breugnot*, "were doubtless not expecting this book as a follow up."<sup>2</sup> And *Colas Breugnot* really is not at all similar to *Jean-Christophe* or to any of the writer's other works of the previous period. This makes it nonetheless truly Rolland's, however. "I particularly would not like," he wrote, "my new work to be interpreted as one inspired by the 'démon du Midi.' It comes from the depth of my being, no less than *Jean-Christophe*; I was as engrossed in it while writing and felt as liberated from it once I had finished as I had felt liberated from *Jean-Christophe*."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Alfred Tarnier on Literature*, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> R. Rolland, *Colas Breugnot*, Paris 1919 p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> R. Rolland, *Cahiers Romain Rolland, Champs de lettres, Cahier 2* 1919 p. 284.





There could be no confusing of the style of *Colas Breugnot* with that of *Jean-Christophe* or of *L'Âme enchantée*. The basic difference is that the former is dealing with quite a different sphere of life, with different conflicts and different characters. This, however, is not enough in itself to predetermine the choice of means of description and expression based on the folk-tale for the narration. This form of narration was chosen as a result of his search for the best means of expression, but it was the basis for much in the description of the characters, the poetic language and the structure as a whole.

It is not difficult to find examples of the structural significance of style as a natural part of the process of disclosing the characteristics of some new subject taken from life. A typical example would be the way Serafimovich worked on *The Iron Flood*. Elements of socialist realism existed in the work of this writer even in the years before the revolution. In an article about the genesis of *The Iron Flood* Serafimovich tells how his desire to create a work that would reflect the heroic greatness of the people's struggle drew his attention to the march of the Taman Army and of how he tried to find new ways of expressing in artistic form the events that were brought about by the revolution.

"I am, strictly speaking, an *écrivain de mœurs*," he writes. "Everyday life was always what I aimed to depict. The questions on which I write arise and find their resolution in this sphere. But in *The Iron Flood*, perhaps for the first time throughout my literary career, I consciously and deliberately ignored this side of life."<sup>1</sup> The writer was clearly aware that the stylistic system that had served him before would not give him the aesthetic effect required to re-create the events of the revolution.

"In *The Iron Flood* I depict the process of collective struggle which I aspired to express as forcefully and concretely as possible. This is not an episode from the life of an individual or a small group of people, in which I would have had to show some hero as vividly as possible with his

<sup>1</sup> A. Serafimovich, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, Moscow, 1960, p. 332.

together and under the influence of some sort of incompressible black magic, senseless mumbling by the author himself take on all the signs of life and seem to exist anew, albeit not yet in the flesh.<sup>1</sup>

Not simply is style formed under the influence of the subject: the raw material of reality, but in its turn it serves itself to organise this material. At one and the same time style depicts the qualities of the latter and has a strong influence on the writer's aesthetic perception of it. The subject taken broadly is usually a complex one, but it is this which attracts the artist in that it allows him to disclose the movement of life and the inner world of man. A true master is distinguished by his ability to collate and digest his material, sorting the essential from the superfluous and moulding it to his own ends. Through his style he has to blend the overall idea of the work with the differing elements existing side by side in the raw material that is his subject.

In the work of different writers we see different relationships between subject and style (as an element of structure) as they seek new ways of expression and as the art of literature evolves. When he had finished *Jean le Jeune* a work of epic and philosophical vein with considerable elements of tragedy, Rouman Rodland wrote *Édouard Brongnon*, a novel filled with *genre de cœur*, a story of sharp and joyful humanism in the form of a folk tale. The readers of *Jean le Jeune* remarked Rodland in the foreword to *Édouard Brongnon* "were it not for me expecting that he is a folk-song singer."<sup>2</sup> And *Édouard Brongnon* really proved all similar to *Jean le Jeune* in so far as the writer's other works of the previous period. This makes it understandable why Rodland himself, especially much earlier, he wrote several more works in the same period as was required by the literary market. It seems to me that depth and style being one and the same for me, I was an experienced writer who was not only not but as I was not I was a writer I had I understood as I had for what I was *Jean le Jeune*.<sup>3</sup>









IN there is a chapter called "A Dialogue Between Reader and Author" where the reader demands that historical material be used in one particular way, with real historical personages while the author reports this as inconsistent with the concept of his work and his artistic personality.

Ah! Monsieur l'auteur what a wonderful chance you have now to give us a few historical portraits. And what portraits! You'll take us to Madrid Castle, and lead us into the middle of the court. And what a court! And will you describe that Franco-Italian court for us? Introduce us, one by one, to all the people we can see there. What things we will learn! What an interesting day we will spend among such grand people!"

"Alas monsieur le lecteur what are you asking of me? I would be delighted if I possessed the talent to write a History of France: if I did, then I wouldn't be writing stories. But tell me why do you want me to introduce to you people who have no part at all to play in my novel?"

The reader wants Mérimée to give him not only the usual depiction of the past with descriptions of famous people, but also to use clichés of style.

"But you're quite wrong not to give them a part to play. How dare you transpose me to the year 1572 and refuse to describe all these distinguished people. Come on, don't hesitate! Let's begin, I'll give you the first phrase: *The door of the salon opened to reveal* . . ."

"But monsieur le lecteur, there were no salons in Madrid Castle, salons . . ."

"All right. *The great hall was filled with people . . . etc . . . among whom stood . . . etc*."

"Whom do you want to see standing there?"

"Who? Well, first of all, Charles IX!"

"Then whom?"

"Stop. First you must describe what he's wearing, then tell me what he looks like, and lastly give a character-sketch. That's how all the novelists do it these days."<sup>1</sup>

⋮

<sup>1</sup> Prosper Mérimée, *Chronique du règne de Charles IX*, Paris, 1927, pp. 109-10.



penetrating reader, that there are many things I know which you will never even have an inkling. What I do know is where Rakhmetov is now, what has happened to him and whether I shall ever see him again."

Later, in the special chapter "A Chat with the Penetrating Reader in Which We Finally Get Rid of Him", we have a very important dialogue on the role and significance of the novel's heroes and its basic structure. "I wanted," notes the author, "to depict ordinary, honest people of the 19th generation, of which I know hundreds. I took three such people: Vera Pavlovna, Lopukhov and Kirsanov... If I had not added Rakhmetov, the majority of my readers would have misunderstood the main heroes. I am willing to bet this right up to the last pages of this chapter Vera Pavlovna, Kirsanov and Lopukhov seemed to the majority of my readers to be heroes of the highest order, idealised even, too noble even to exist in reality. But as you now see, they are as earthly as the rest of us. The whole of humanity can and should be on their level. 'Higher natures' that you and I will never reach, my poor friends, are not like these. I have sketched in the profile of one such, and as you see, it is altogether different. As for those whom I have depicted fully, you can be like them if you are willing to work at your development."

Straightforward asides to the reader, or rather, to groups of readers, making clearer the work's undercurrents and hidden perspectives, are characteristic of the structure and style of the novel.

Although having something in common, the structural significance of the straightforward address is different in these two works, which goes to stress the creative potential of contact with the reader and the influence constantly exerted in different ways by the latter on the writer's credo.

#### 4

Style, in the sense of the means of expressing an imaginative understanding of reality, acting through ideas and emotions, cannot be identified with the form of a work just as







concealed beneath refined and educated sophistication even in those commonly considered both noble and upright." Breaking in on a narration essentially comic in tone, this pathetic outburst gives new edge and meaning to the humour of the whole of the rest of the story, so that the narration is given an undercurrent of tragedy.

The combination of the overall tone with different undertones goes to make up the intonational structure of a work of literature. As Nemirovich-Danchenko put it: "In a good play we can always feel the individual intonation of the author. If it is missing, then the author is bereft of talent."<sup>1</sup> Intonation in the widest sense of the word is not only the emotional colouring of the narration or the dramatic action, but something rather more. Since intonation is amalgamated with the imagistic exposition of the subject it is expressive of all that is unique in any individual perception of life. Connoisseurs of literature can determine the author according to the intonation of a quotation which is new to them or by a few lines of a poem with which they were not previously acquainted, which fact in itself is enough to show the true significance of intonation in a work of art.

The difference between style and method which we noted above by no means precludes their interaction and the resultant dialectical unity set up between them. This unity is to be witnessed in various component elements of style, and intonation is one of them. The writer's attitude to reality is one of the essential characteristics of his artistic method, as expressed in his choice of material, his method of typification and the relationships in which he places his heroes. It is, however, even more specifically expressed in the basic tone and combinations of undertones which characterise either a particular work or else the *oeuvre* of a particular writer as a whole.

In this case the writer's attitude to the subject is one of the fundamentals of style with its own function to perform. Style is often considered indivisible from method insofar as they are both aspects of something of a profound inner unity.

<sup>1</sup> M. Knebel *All Through Life* Moscow, 1967, p. 368 (in Russian).

but they must not be narrowed in this way. Analytical distinction between the various components of a work of literature is made not simply to describe them, but to determine the part they play in the work as a whole. The unity of style and method does not prevent each from carrying out its own particular function in the same manner as the different elements of style.

Even more than in the intonational pattern of a work, the complex inflections of which we spoke are to be found in the intonations of an individual style, inflections which are a function of the different themes and questions touched upon by the writer and his multivalent emotional attitude to the events, characters and conflicts he describes. These inflections are based on the leading principles behind the author's style. We have already remarked upon the importance of Belinsky's idea of the "pathos", as the author's leading intention and emotion diffused through the works he created. The basic qualities of his intonation and the dominant tone of his style are closely connected with this idea. And since it is something both multivalent and changing, is dependent upon the development of the life of society and the evolution of the writer's artistic and moral principles, it is quite natural that there should be different intonational "epicentres" and different styles in the work of one and the same writer.

The particular way in which characters, events and circumstances are described is also one of the determining factors of an individual style. Both in the history of literature and in works analysing particular books this has been widely enough demonstrated not to need further study on these pages. It would be of more worth, as we see it, to disclose the relationship between the stylistic principle mentioned above and the characteristics of artistic method, especially since in this sphere there is much that remains unclear. The principles according to which artistic characters and types are depicted are connected by some theorists with method and other with style. And although it would be impossible to distinguish completely between these two phenomena since they are so closely interwoven, we are bound to point out some of the concrete differences that exist between them.





the human species, analogous to the world of nature, which he was convinced existed in human society as well. And he depicted human emotions from the point of view of the way they were affected by a developing and strengthening bourgeois society. His attention was attracted by the different ways in which people adapted to it, the way norms of social order changed man.

Stendhal, on the other hand, was interested in the passions that invade the human soul as an expression of hidden strength and demonstration of spiritual individuality. This spiritual individuality he contrasted with the process of levelling, taking place in society, that wore down the individual while appearing to allow him to express his individualism to the full. In Stendhal, the history of the human soul is one with the movement of life, and it enters the narration as an essential part of the lives of the characters. The hero's contact with reality fans the flames of his feelings and aspirations and gives us a more profound glimpse of the energy inherent in them.

Stendhal stresses the individual rather than the generic characteristics of his heroes' spiritual world. The passions and aspirations of his characters are always colourful and unique. We have only to compare Julien Sorel and Fabrice, Mathilde de La Mole and Gina Sanseverina or Ferrante Palla and Altamira to see how unique are the feelings and aspirations of each one. Basing his work on his overall view of man, Stendhal depicts their development in similar but sometimes sharply differing movements of the heart in various individuals. The most important thing on which he concentrates and directs the reader's attention is the way in which the heroes are totally in the sway of their feelings and passions and determined to overcome all obstacles that lie in their path.

Exterior circumstances play a varying part in the novels of Stendhal. They are very significant in, for instance, *La Chartreuse de Parme* which is full of events and adventures. *Le Rouge et le Noir*, on the other hand, is distinguished by its lack of extraordinary events. But even when the narrative is full of action, it is an internal moving principle that brings about the clashes of feeling and passion.

that go to make up the story of a human heart. The hero may be a strong, exceptional personality as in many of Tolstoy's novels or on the other hand he may not, but at the centre of the way each one of them is depicted lies the development of their spiritual will against the background of life.

The aesthetic effect of a particular style emerges in the expressiveness of the various individuals created by the writer and in the way they demonstrate to us all the riches of the human heart.

## 5

The quality of a particular style is evident in the architectonics of a work of literature, i.e. in the combinations in which different means of expression are used. In its functional role within a stylistic system architectonics can be described as the purposeful and efficient organisation of narrative or dramatic space and time in the light of the basic aesthetic principles to which the writer adheres. Like intonation and the depiction of character, the architectonics of a work encompass both content and the way in which this content is expressed.

While working out his compositional construction the writer is interested first and foremost in the relationships between the characters and the part played by each one in the development of the plot or the dramatic action. It is the dynamic combination of characters which builds the work, as it were, from within. The writer's first ideas of characters and composition are usually realised incompletely or very differently from the way in which he first imagined them. The artistic consciousness of the writer is constantly occupied with selecting the characters and seeing that they "emerge" correctly, and with determining the changing relationships between them and the different ways in which they might be combined.

In his article "Better Late Than Never" Goncharov wrote of the "invisible but herculean labours demanded to put together a whole novel" "Architectonics alone, i.e. the way



appearance of a new form of plot, the presence of the author himself responding to the work."

We know that the "specific gravities" of the plot as a form of art and the forms that it can take change with the passage of time and are different at various stages of the literary literature and in various literary movements. In modern literature, however, the plot has always been of importance although there was a certain need of a rich variety of forms. The search for new forms of plot in contemporary modern literature in modern literature is just as natural and necessary as that for other means of expression. The fundamental difference between this search and that in which many writers from non-readers contemporary movements are engaged lies in the fact that not only do readers not reject the logical ties that exist in life, but what they are seeking is ways in which to disclose these more profoundly while many other writers of today reject reality and view the world as a chaos in which they find it useless to seek for any natural ties.

In Soviet theoretical and critical literature we often find the significance of the plot rightly stressed as an embodiment of the life-truth and means of observing character. Often, however, we find contested the idea that "the function of plot is to stimulate the interest of the reader"; even though embodiment of the life-truth in no way precludes this other function. On the contrary in the work of a talented writer the two are closely knit together. In the work of the greatest writers we see that not only do they not ignore the reader's interest but that they have it constantly in mind both in their choice of a plot and in its development.

The organic combination in the plot of life-truth and narrative interest can be demonstrated through the works of two so very different writers, Dostoyevsky and Saint-Exupéry. Dostoyevsky is a great master of plot as an integral part of his vision of the complexities and conflicts faced by his contemporaries and of his conviction that life and man himself are full of riddles and mysteries.

<sup>1</sup> See B. Sarnov, "What Is Plot?", *Voprosy literatury*, No. 1, 1948, p. 91.



The mystery and its explanation, as part of the plot, present in many of the works of Dostoyevsky, like *Crime and Punishment*, *The Adolescent*, and so on. In *The Adolescent* solving of a mystery goes to make up the basic story—Arkady Dolgoruky, illegitimate son of a serf and landowner Versilov, brought up by strangers almost without seeing his parents until the age of twenty, is tortured by desire to know what kind of a man his father was, hounded out of respectable society not long before their meeting.

As he attempts to solve the mystery which so affects him into the hands of Arkady Dolgoruky falls another secret of no mean significance, a letter compromising Akhmatova. Gradually it is revealed that Akhmatova's life story is closely interwoven with that of Versilov. The attempt to solve one secret and the struggle that takes place lead the main hero, who is the narrator, to a new stage of life, character and human relationships.

Unique though Dostoyevsky's use of the mystery is, similar to that of many great writers of the 19th century, Walter Scott, Dickens, Balzac or Stendhal, the 20th century, however, plot is used especially by those who write lyrical; in the person of Saint-Exupéry.

The novellas and stories of Saint-Exupéry, course, devoid of tense situations or, moreover, these events, usually of a lyrical nature, that are often the centre of interest for the reader, not, however, given as one unbroken flow into the lyrical and philosophical work of Saint-Exupéry the inner motivation is not built on combinations of different sides of reality but also on the development of a poetic idea which is a contemplation of life and of different sides of reality but also on the development of a poetic idea which is a contemplation of life and of description of colourful events at life and work.

The idea and emotion behind his work is a hymn in praise of man, his audacity, responsibility for what he does around him and unceasing

humanity itself. In the book *Terre des hommes* Saint-Exupéry wrote "To be a man means to be aware that you are fully responsible. To burn with shame at the existence of poverty, even though it would seem not to be your fault. To be proud of the victories won by your comrades. And to know that by adding your stone you are helping to build the world." The hidden plot of *Terre des hommes* is the movement of the writer's thought about the strength of man and his constant desire to discover something new in life and overcome the greatest obstacles, thought about the value of what is human in humanity, the value of comradely friendship. This thought unites all the episodes that alternate with the writer's lyrical contemplation.

The most important links in the compositional chain of *Terre des hommes* are the descriptions of two events, the accidents that befall his friend Guillaumet and Saint-Exupéry himself. Guillaumet's plane crashes in the snowy peaks of some uninhabited part of South America. Guillaumet displays incredible strength of will and self-control in an almost hopeless situation, which help him to overcome exceptional difficulties and deprivations. Guillaumet is not left alone: his friends hurry to his assistance. The plane carrying Saint-Exupéry and the mechanic Prévot also crashes, in the Sahara. They are put through unbelievable trials which they bear only because they do not lose their inner resolve to keep hold of life to the very last, and are saved by a nomad whom they meet in the desert. "You, Libyan Bedouin, you were our saviour, but your features will be effaced from my memory. I will not remember your face. You are Man, and I will recognise in you all men. You had never seen us before, but accepted us at once. You are my beloved brother. And I will also recognise you in all men."

However dramatic the events which befall Guillaumet and the author of *Terre des hommes*, the narrative interest of this book, as of Saint-Exupéry's other works, lies not only, or perhaps, not so much, in the description of events as in the development of the "inner" plot. This especially clearly discloses the structure of a book like *Pilote de guerre*, based on a flight to gather information behind the lines of the



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Unique though Dostoyevsky's use of the plot might be, it is similar to that of many great writers of the 19th century like Walter Scott, Dickens, Balzac or Stendhal. By the realists of the 20th century, however, plot is treated very differently, especially by those who write lyrical prose, best represented in the person of Saint-Exupéry.

The novellas and stories of Saint-Exupéry are not, of course, devoid of tense situations or dramatic events. It is, moreover, these events, usually of an exceptional nature, that are often the centre of interest for the author. They are not, however, given as one unbroken chain, but are woven into the lyrical and philosophical fabric of the work. In the work of Saint-Exupéry the inner movement of narrative and plot is not built on combinations of events but on the development of a poetic idea which encompasses not only different sides of reality but also different ways of reflecting — contemplation of life and of people, memories, the description of colourful events and episodes from everyday life and work.

The idea and emotion behind the work of Saint-Exupéry is a hymn in praise of man, his strength, creative potential, clarity, responsibility for what goes on in the world around him and unceasing ties with others and with



succeeded in maintaining the art of the word with such convincing characters."<sup>1</sup> Marcel Proust, too, was sceptical about style. "The more I work," he wrote, "the more I am convinced that if one's aim is to express the truth as fully as possible, then one must cease to worry about one's style." Flaubert's opinion was the opposite. "A well-written piece never tires the reader, for style is life itself, the life-blood of thought."

As we see the views of the essence of style that I expressed here are completely different. While for Proust style is something in conflict with the life-truth, for Flaubert it is life itself. In the remark by Gorky we can sense a certain distinction between style and the expression of character that we do not find in the rest of his statements on the subject. Why such differences in the value placed on style? It is because in practice emerges the rich diversity of different functions of style which would seem to give rise to these extreme differences of opinion.

Style expresses a new perception of the world, serving as a kind of catalyst for the thoughts, feelings and meditations of the reader. If, however, it is bereft of the sap of artistic advances, it degenerates into "wordiness" which fulfils nothing more than a merely decorative function. Linguistic "lace" is often a mark for insignificant and ordinary content, passions long since died down and the avoidance of themes of any profundity. Style, on the other hand, is a thing of living strength, though often nothing more than a clever imitation of this strength, for sometimes instead of bearing witness to creative growth and development it acts as a brake to both of these and brings the work to stagnation.

It is important to study these polar opposites that arise through the phenomenon of style from the standpoint of their critical analysis and of artistic practice. It is obvious that a writer cannot work out his style and then write in it for the rest of his life. Style is something formed in the process of tackling those problems of expression with which the writer is faced in life in general and in his personal development in particular. In art it is impossible to achieve something new

<sup>1</sup> *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 70, Moscow, 1963, p. 482 (in Russian)



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in hand have already matured in the author's mind. The thought of how it will be realised is ever present even in creative concepts that have only just started to form. As the form of the dramatic conflict and the relationships between the characters become clear, the more urgently the artist experiences the need to determine which of the forms at his disposal and means of realising his concept are the best. It would be wrong to assume that this always happens in the process of creating a work of art. We often hear of writers first "trying out" various means of expression before they settle for one of them. But very often much thought is put into the question of the basic ways in which an artistic concept will be expressed before the work comes actually to be written.

The playwright Victor Rozov has this to say on the subject: "I personally think for ten months and write for two or three. A work of literature that has not been given time to mature in thought is always a thing of suspicion, and one can always judge this by the work itself."<sup>1</sup> Rozov is convinced that the preparatory work on the play and its actual writing are very different things from the point of view of the role they play as regards analysis. "Before sitting down at your desk, you must think for a long time, contemplate, read works of philosophy, and so on. But the moment you sit down, you must throw all this out of your head. There must be no analysing during the process of work. Put that off until the next morning: you must assign a separate time to it. Once you start writing, do not stop."<sup>2</sup>

In whatever way he sets about his work, the talented writer will always be faced with problems of expression and of the features of form and style.

Since the development of art and literature is a function of the development of society in general and form and style are not simply subjective categories but real expressions of the spiritual culture of an age, some theorists are inclined to see them as pre-determined, something independent of the artist's consciousness which is expressed in his work whether he

<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Literature*, No. 8, 1968, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.



are doing all this to find out several more of what was going on in the Russian literature of the 19th century, showing the stages and variations of Russian realism, that have been overlooked by scholars since within the past few years, but we do hope that one of the great tasks before Soviet literary studies and historians will one day be completed: namely, will be defined the stylistic laws governing Russian critical realism both in the multiplicity of currents within the movement and in the even greater multiplicity of individual styles which represented it.<sup>1</sup> We cannot help seeing the expression 'lead us to hope' if it is merely a question of 'hopes' then there is a possibility that these hopes might not be realized.

There are bound to be differences of style within any literary movement, but there are of greatest significance in realistic literature. Apart from anything else, it aims to encompass reality and since style always corresponds to subject, it is natural that realism should be as richly faceted as reality itself. To see its common denominator as an important link in the chain of the literary process is to stress the very essence of this complex multiplicity.

We should seek the principle behind such movements as romanticism and realism not in some common style but in the common creative principles of their poetics, which throw into sharp relief the similarities between different writers and between writers from different countries. Up till now little attention has been paid to its poetics as symptomatic of one literary movement or another, essential though this be to a clear exposition of what is unique to a particular literary movement or school. Poetics and style are closely related, but poetics is a somewhat wider concept.

In any case, the idea of finding one, all-embracing style for romanticism or realism remains at the level of conjecture. And until these conjectures are grounded in facts produced by research, there is no justification for seeing one style, common to a whole movement, as a basic category of the literary process. Even without this, however, style loses none of its significance as one of the most important facets of a work of literature.

<sup>1</sup> A. Sokolov, *op. cit.*, p. 161.



...the most important reflection of problems that were posed in the social sciences at that time. This was reflected in the work of Gorky in 1917.

Gorky's creative development at the end of the 1910s began with the 25th anniversary around the work of the political revolutionaries, a course that was forming the new evidence in the social life of the country. The economy and political conditions were becoming more and more unstable, leading to the transfer of social forces concentrated on the work of the revolution to some other work, which had long experienced in social life. The feeling was that the old work was not enough and led to the new discovery was a changed reality, the new quality brought the life of society at the time, now that the revolution was not movement had started taking practical steps.

The social transformation of society in the work of Gorky takes the form not only of something possible and desirable but of a logical process brought about by life itself and the idealized struggle of the working masses. It is not only that he always demonstrates the connection between reality and the "practical ideal" but he even more generalizations acquire an essentially new quality. Despite the most widely differing aspects of social reality and subjecting them to subtle artistic analysis, Gorky underlines those elements which are to lead to the transformation of life and which bear within themselves the seed of the future.

Gorky sees the world in unceasing and contradictory motion and is sensitive to the strident changes that herald the development of those elements destined to transform it. His imagination was fired by the active, creative role in life which he held to be the true destiny of man. One of the expressions of a new approach to reality was the creation of characters who not only are aware of the injustices of the system but also feel within themselves the strength to right it, to transform life so as to set it on a logical and righteous footing.

As Nil, the hero of *The Petty Bourgeois*, puts it - "I know that life is a serious business, but it's unorganised, and to get it organised will take all the strength and talent that I have









between literature and the life of society, the life of the people, the civic virtues of art of which we made mention earlier. In this statement Bely left no doubt at all about where he himself stood, and this position found considerable support in symbolist circles.

Of course, the symbolists did not always stay within the limits of their own credo—in fact they often strayed even from it.

In the period of social upheaval in 1905, for instance, some of the Russian symbolists wrote works that were both interesting and full of civic ethos. And their creative ideas about "apoliticality" quickly melted away for many symbolists later, during the October Revolution and in the years that followed, as they reacted immediately to what was going on in society around them and published works of a totally social nature, directed against the revolution and the people in general. The basic tendency at the time of the birth and during the prime of the symbolist movement was, however, not simply the rejection of the social aspect of literature but something even more extreme—the propagation of the idea that the civic involvement spells death for art itself. This did not, however, prevent them from asserting their own world view to the full along with their own perception of life.

An important feature of symbolist poetry was the cult of the individual expressed in various guises. The self as precious, such a bottomless well of surprises was regarded as the supreme value. "I have myself like God," wrote Dmitri Nabokov. This recognition of the self as the only true value—total concentration on one's own inner life and the break with all that was everyday and humdrum are all means that are constantly to be found in the poetry of the revolution. The detachment of the individual from the world around him developed as a part with this hyper-trophic self which means that it became the centre of the universe, encompassing everything else contained within it. "I would be everything in everything," declared Evgeny Yevtushenko. "I am everything and in everything and and and I." Likewise his is the famous poem "Landscape" in which he writes: "I am the centre of the universe." "I am the centre of the universe," he writes.







addresses itself not to everybody — but to a specially picked minority.<sup>1</sup>

The idea that there is no connection at all between literature and the life of society and that of the élitism of art are supported in various guises by contemporary bourgeois theorists too. In one way or another they contrast "true art" for the few with the "mass culture" created by the press, the cinema and so on as highly saleable produce. But the greater and by far most significant part of this "mass culture" is created — as the bourgeois theorists neglect to point out, with the aim of morally corrupting and enslaving the simple-minded and satisfying vulgar low tastes and demands which are nevertheless encouraged and cultivated by the ruling circles in capitalist society.

The idea of an art for the élite is as inconceivable for socialist literature as that of a commercial "mass culture". In his article "Party Organisation and Party Literature" Lenin wrote: "We have no desire to become, and shall not become, prisoners of bourgeois-shopkeeper literary relations."<sup>2</sup> At the same time he stressed that the new, free literature would serve "not the bored 'upper ten thousand' suffering from fatty degeneration, but the millions and tens of millions of working people — the flower of the country, its strength and its future."<sup>3</sup>

It is, as we can see, easy to distinguish between the socialist literature that was taking shape at the time and the symbolists, decadents and other anti-realist movements of the 20th century that were developing alongside it: on the one hand there is the realisation of lofty social aims in literature and on the other the negation of its social content, on the one the living link between art and the life of the people, on the other the idea of an art for the élite, and lush the study of life through art contrasted with an undetermined form of irrational "insight". And we are perfectly

<sup>1</sup> I. Ortega y Gasset, *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Writings on Art and Culture*, New York, 1956 pp. 7, 6.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

justified in saying that it is to the October Revolution that we owe both the speed with which socialist literature grew and the way in which its artistic principles developed.

### 3

The revolution which took place in Russia in October 1917 and the fundamental changes which it brought about in social relations converted to socialism new sectors of the working population not only at home but in many countries abroad as well. The October Revolution gave the whole world real hope that the ideas of scientific socialism could be realised in fact and deed, and the revolutionary transformation of Russia had a strong influence on the intelligentsia, including that of the art world, so that many outstanding intellectuals from all over the world gave their support to socialism. This was all a sign that socialist culture and literature had grown and developed into a phenomenon of international stature. The wave of revolution that swept across the globe gave something qualitatively new to the world of literature: a new epoch in its history had started.

It is only natural that the most favourable conditions for the successful development of socialist literature should have been found in our country. At one time there was much discussion of the relationship between socialist and proletarian literature. This was, however, mostly of a purely academic nature, for there was no ultimate justification of the contraposition of the two that took place in the Proletarian literature could never be anything other than socialist although it is not every work, of course, containing socialist ideas that reflects the ideological principles of scientific socialism. The Programme of the Communist Party of the USSR states: "In fulfilling its historic mission, the revolutionary remaker of the old society and creator of a new system, the working class has met the artistic











2. The same argument can be applied to those works which have not only before the writer but already to him! Foreign countries are the product of the life of the people of what is going on beneath the surface of the life. It demonstrates between the writer's great interest in actual works which do not contain any real popular elements is often the result of the influence of literature which had the greatest effect on these emotional men.

We must not even the ideological and artistic qualities of works of literature as something completely closed especially if we keep in mind the differences in all different artists are working as well as in what they write.

At the same time we must not disregard the obvious differences in the personalities with which they deal in life truth and the breadth of their artistic generalization, the degree and extent to which they express the feelings and aspirations of the people, differences which are all very real and could not but be so in literature.

There would be no justification in a study of Soviet literature or of any other socialist literature. He must comparisons between the degree to which the popular quality is found in the work of different writers, it would be both unjustified and unnecessary for the simple reason that what we are dealing with is a process during which both the writers themselves and the relationship between the works they create are changed. This by no means, however, precludes the need to analyse the social and aesthetic significance of the works of a given writer or to evaluate in the correct historical perspective, the place of one great author or another in the development of literature as a whole or the power of his characters and the links between them and the life of the people.

Sometimes the popular quality of socialist literature is seen as a depreciation of the role of the writer himself, as though he were there simply to relay moods, thoughts and feelings that already exist in their finished form, as nothing but a kind of artistic loudspeaker. There is no doubt, however, that the artist fulfils his social function only when he forces us to look at life anew, to see and feel things that did not see and feel before.

Works that are truly permeated with the spirit of the people are created by writers of great talent and of vivid artistic personality. It is they who enrich socialist literature with works of world significance. Its popular quality is expressed in the work of writers who are original and unique, devoted to the revolution, the people and socialism.

It is on this soil that the adherence to the party principles of socialist literature takes root and develops. The chief characteristic of the principle of party loyalty lies in the fact that the writer is openly a champion of socialism, the historic cause of the working class, the whole people, under the leadership of the Communist Party. Apoliticality, feigned or real, over-refined aestheticism, praise of the way of life created by capitalism, in fact everything practised and preached by bourgeois writers of all colours is foreign to socialist literature, which counters it with active and consistent adherence to the ideals of communism. The Leninist principle of the party loyalty of socialist literature blends harmoniously with the popular principle and in fact is the latter taken to its logical conclusion. We must recognise the truth of the idea that the Communist Party spirit is the highest expression of all that we mean by "popular" in art.

The opponents of socialist literature attempt to demonstrate that the party commitment is at odds with free artistic creation, that it is applied from without and acts as a brake upon the latter. It is, however, common knowledge that there is no true art without ideas and that great ideas are the wings upon which it launches into flight. And the principles of communism are the great ideas of our age. The Communist Party spirit lies at the heart of this art not because it is grafted on from without but because it has become the true personal conviction of the writers themselves, the basis of their creative thought and of the feeling with which their work is fired.

Some critics view the party commitment as the part played by the writer in a social movement.<sup>1</sup> However important this

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<sup>1</sup> See I. V. Volgin, *The Party Spirit in Art*, Moscow, 1946 (in Russian).















However good and the generalisations contained in the best works of talented writers from the school of realism both in their themes and in their style is that they stand apart from the positive ideas which age has given birth. The ethical and social aspects of contemporary critical realism is to be seen not only in its exposure of the evils and imperfections of the world but in their defence of humanity and of justice. If were their hopes for the future they often stop short of complete faith in the power of good and humanity, trusting first reason then to some combination of spontaneous desire and feelings which will supposedly help to overcome its faults in the acquisitive society of today.

Socialist realism is the declared enemy of the dehumaning of man which is the main theme of various branches of contemporary bourgeois literature, from that devoted to 'mass' production to the more over-refined works of the modernists and decadents. Bourgeois literature strives to prove that human nature is unchanging and that it would be impossible to bring about any real changes in human relations. This is seen as a function of the power over human nature of our darker instincts, low desires and unbridled egotism and cruelty as a constant need for violence and for the subjugation and destruction of our fellows. Contemporary bourgeois literature has created a cult of cruelty preaching dissipation and cynicism. It not only justifies, but constantly extols those who trample upon the basis of morality, destroying human dignity and committing violence upon the defenceless.

The stability of human nature that is constantly being claimed by not only writers and journalists but by bourgeois philosophers as well is one of the most important arguments used to support the idea that the capitalist basis of society, too, is something firm and unshakeable. By his very nature man remains and will remain as he always was, in spite of all the changes wrought by civilisation, changes in the social relations between people cannot affect the fundamental basis of society, especially the principle of private ownership as the holy of holies—this is the unchanging tune which contemporary bourgeois writers sing.





Drama with music that enthralls the listener or with a powerful organ that is capable of expressing the complex world of human emotions.

*What do I care for the Guelphs and the Ghibellines,  
Hellfire and heaven, and similar fare?  
Why then do I, when I start reading Dante,  
Read with a tension I hardly can bear?*

*Even though organ vaults one day may perish,  
Brass rust and flutes lose their magical spell,  
Men, just like Dante, their freedom shall cherish  
While Earth produces his visions of hell*

One may not agree with the measure of scepticism about overthorough historical research into works of art expressed here. We must not lose sight of the fact, however, that in their socio-genetic study of literary works of the past scholars usually ignore their socio-aesthetic impact and fail to reveal what makes them so dear to the present age or in what sense they have become a part of contemporary culture. In contrast with many idealist trends Marxism-Leninist theory stresses the active role of art. In the previous chapter we have already spoken of the function of various streams within socialist literature. Now it is time to have a wider look at this question.

The history of literature shows clearly that different ages see with different eyes both the work of great writers as a whole and their books taken separately. How different, for instance, the evaluations of Shakespeare have been over the centuries! During the classical period Shakespeare was disliked in England, his comedies admitted to display some talent but his tragedies slated as worthless and demonstrative of nothing more than bad taste.

Shakespeare was discovered for the French in the 17th century by Voltaire. He declared the English playwright a genius but one whose work was a strange mixture of completely unconnected elements. "Shakespeare is the father of modern comedy, but he is also the father of the barbarity

enough to explain their influence on the social consciousness of subsequent ages. There is, however, only a limited amount of truth in this claim.

The study of the social genesis of a work of literature is not yet enough to determine what will happen to it in future, first and foremost because it will enter the realm of other ages and generations with differing ideological and artistic requirements. And the more the critic concerns himself with historical and other minutiae the more thorough his local literary comparisons, the less room there is for attempts to disclose the very essence of the artistic life of a work of literature. At present much research is being carried out into the "background" of various writers, with descriptions of their relations and acquaintances, the third circumstances removed of these acquaintances and so on, all these efforts prove at best a little unproductive and at worst extremely naive. Just as unproductive are attempts to "fit in" the characters and images of a work of literature with specific facts and events from the writer's life as we know it: in this case the meaning of these characters and images as artistic generalisations is forced to go completely by the board.

These minutely historical and descriptive accounts have always abounded. But in recent years they called forth a reaction, as can be seen from the marked dissatisfaction with the kind of research and criticism that concern themselves purely with the social genesis of the work. "Do all those hundreds of millions," wrote Ilya Ehrenburg, "really read *Le Rouge et le Noir* simply in order to get an idea of what French society was like at the end of the 1820s? Or who would dare to claim that *Don Quixote* has had such an appeal for centuries merely because it is a satire on the novels of knightly valour so dear to the Spaniards of the 16th century?"<sup>1</sup>

A similar thought was expressed by Ilya Selvinsky in his poem "Dante", where the poet compares the *Commedia*

<sup>1</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg, *Collected Works* in 9 volumes, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1965, p. 136 (in Russian).

Drama with music that entralls the listener or with a powerful organ that is capable of expressing the complex world of human emotions.

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which it is done without. Therefore he wrote "If good genius, devoid of culture and of taste, produces a picture to me. His plans are monstrous, but the manner which creates scenes that are masterpieces of nature." We are among the English some aspects of Shakespeare's work. Voltaire did not write much that was in a direction that "points" to the lack of culture in the creative personality of the artist. It seems to write as though Voltaire saw it to bring together in the mind of Shakespeare all that is an exceptionally strong and great as one can imagine with all that is low and disgusting, the province of modern courtesans.<sup>1</sup>

The Romantics, including the English, were secure in their appreciation of Shakespeare seeing his work as a model of the extremely bright and daring art, bursting through all the canons and traditional, scholastic rules. He became something of a rallying point for the Romantics in their struggle with classicism and its dogmas. This did not however prevent Byron for one from being extremely critical in his attitude to Shakespeare.<sup>2</sup>

The work of the English dramatist was an inspiring example not only for the Romantics but also for many realist writers. We have only to recall Pushkin and the extent to which Shakespeare influenced the formation of his realist method. While writing  *Boris Godunov*, his first realist work, Pushkin took active note of the artistic legacy of, as he put it, "father Shakespeare." Impervious to worldly influences," wrote Pushkin, "I imitated Shakespeare in the freedom and breadth of his character delineation and the simple spontaneous depiction of his types."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, *La mort de César* préface (de l'année 1723).

<sup>2</sup> *Collection complète des œuvres de M<sup>r</sup> de Voltaire*, t. IV, Genève, MDCCXVIII, p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> In his letter to Thomas Moore (May 3, 1821) he wrote "You may call Shakespeare and Milton pyramids, if you please, but I prefer the Temple of Theseus or the Parthenon to a mountain of burnt brick-work." (*The Works of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals* Vol. V, London, New York, 1904, p. 274.)

<sup>4</sup> A. S. Pushkin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 9, p. 140 (in Russian).



which is made things to be more interesting and more interesting not  
themselves to the study, as he said in the first age, and there is  
more interest in the study of it as he says that.

The poet's work of Pushkin in the first age is to be  
considered as the first poem, the first age when he  
was writing, and as he says that was at the first, he  
was writing even then in the first. This is probably more  
a's time of the work which he was doing, but it was the first  
when Pushkin wrote these poems. In the second age  
was Pushkin that took place in the 18th and 19th years  
poems of his were published, there were many different  
and in the same time, there was quite similar poems of  
his which had nothing to do with the historical approach  
and which were completely and distinctly the poet's work. If  
the supporters of "free verse" like Drushchenko and  
Vernadsky were trying to show in their praise of Pushkin  
that he was the exponent of the idea of "pure art"  
completely unconnected with history and its needs, since  
like Proust, when he failed to find in Pushkin's work the  
specific social content for which he was looking, tendentiously  
rejected everything that the poet had ever written. The  
conviction that Pushkin's poetry was totally devoid of  
anything which could be of significance to the real world led  
to Proust's extreme views on, for instance, the poem "A  
Monument": "Pushkin knows which side his bread is but-  
tered on when he calls upon the wild tribes of the steppes,  
since it is quite possible that the more civilized tribes in the  
Russian empire, Finn or 'proud Slav's posterity, might  
soon disappoint the ambitions and castles-in-the-air of this  
skilful versifier who took upon himself to don the wreath of  
immortality to which he had no right".<sup>2</sup> However un-  
founded this and other declarations, they do bear witness to  
the changing fortunes of Pushkin's work and the way in  
which it was seen differently through different eyes.

The work of Pushkin has come into contact with the most

<sup>1</sup> V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Vol. 5, p. 555 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> D. I. Proust, *Selected Works* in 4 volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow  
1956, p. 413 (in Russian).



applies to the 30 years old novel as it did to modern and Anti  
in Fiction

There are several points one must take into account  
concerning the attitude to the work of a writer as he goes out to  
knowing of other countries and the writing style.

In literature, the work, *Les Misérables* with him. The last of  
Taine is strong. During his lifetime, the French was more  
convinced than I myself when we first met that he was a  
great writer. Taine wrote after Emerson was dead  
the problem of the 19th century was much different, to be sure  
was particular to that time and to him. But that does not  
make it any.

The type of a writer's language is often different in  
different countries. Let us take the writer, Gustave  
Flaubert, French, who was French born and brought  
in a number of European countries but who was born  
in France. For many years, Werner F.  
Friedrich, the author of *Dante's Fame Abroad*, has been  
on the subject. With the exception of Charles de Gaulle  
and some of the writers, the French thought  
the century as the death of Voltaire and the dawn of  
Romanticism, post-romanticism to Dante. The French  
Romanticism could appreciate the messages taught by  
Petrarch, Ariosto, and Castiglione but Dante, and with good  
reason, is considered medieval rather than modern.

The impact of both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky was complex  
and different in different countries. Suffice it to note the  
effect of Tolstoy in India and some other Eastern countries  
where he is appreciated first and foremost as a religious  
philosopher, or the admiration in some West European  
countries of Dostoevsky for his idea of the tragedy of  
human existence and humbles, in spite of the sharp criticism  
expressed in his work and his passionate attacks upon  
capitalism. One typical example of differing attitudes to a

<sup>1</sup> Anatole France, *Oeuvres complètes*, tome VI, Paris, 1920,  
p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Werner F. Friedrich, *Dante's Fame Abroad, 1450-1850*, Rome  
1930, p. 37.



And the greater the work, the more people it attracts, bringing them closer and provoking similar feelings and thoughts within their minds.

The individual quality of a work of talent does not exclude the multivalence of its characters, and this multivalence is the result of something more complex than their being mere ciphers to be brought to life and coloured by each reader for himself. This multivalence is a direct result of the power of generalisation contained within the character itself. Containing features that are typical of real life and of human personality and experience, the vivid character invites comparison with different sides and facets of life. Profound artistic generalisations—and in this lies their great historic and aesthetic value—attract into their sphere of "influence" many of the processes of reality far removed both in time and in character from the reality that inspired their creation in the writer. Don Quixote, Hamlet, Rastugin, Plyushkin and Oblomov, created in a particular period and under particular circumstances, all bear the stamp of the age which gave them birth. But they all contain human qualities which belong equally to completely different stages in the development of society and are therefore constantly renewed and revitalised. When they enter the life of a different age they are invested with new meaning, and it is this meaning which makes for the multivalence by which they are distinguished.

The evolution of the "meaning" of the characters in works of literature can be plotted through a study not only of the life-span of works of the past but also of the way in which contemporary works are received. We know, for instance, that in the poem "Sorokoust" Esenin by describing the "contest" between a train and a foal racing through the steppe was symbolically showing the contradictions between town and country as he saw them during the period when the new social relations were being established. However, this interpretation of the images in the poem is not the most important one for the present-day reader. The poem has preserved its great emotional power, but now it is taken more generally, with more accent on its lyrical and philosophical undertones.





proached all problems of theory in a pure subjective way, as we have seen from the conclusions made by Cornfeld.

Soviet literary criticism can boast some valuable areas to study literature from the point of view of its literary history. I will name but two of them; the first was published in the 1930s. Victor Zhirmunsky's monograph on *Goethe in Russian Literature*, and the second was published only recently, an anthology, put together by Victor Alekseev, called *Shakespeare and Russian Culture*. Both works, based on a large amount of concrete material, written from a firm and distinct theoretical position. Zhirmunsky follows the history of the "artistic influence" of Goethe in Russian literature, and the theoretical interpretations of Goethe in Russian literature, in the conviction that translations are an organic part of the original literature, striving to define Goethe's role in the literary development of the 18th and 19th centuries. The authors of *Shakespeare and Russian Culture* pay considerable attention not only to the literary influence of the English writer over a long period of time, but also up to his work in the field of drama, poetry, and prose.



literatures these connections are different and, moreover, besides having his own national heritage to lean on, a writer from any republic can turn to the progressive traditions of the literatures of all the other peoples, and especially to those of Russian classical literature. These traditions so often appear in other national literatures, interwoven with the artistic experience gained throughout their development as part of the Soviet nation.

A profound and thorough study of the assimilation and the development of classical traditions in contemporary literature will permit us not only to shed light upon some facets of the way the literature of the past has lived on into our time, but also to disclose ever more fully the innovative quality of socialist literatures and the character and particularities of the artistic discoveries which they have to their credit.

If the influence of the literature of previous ages on contemporary literature passes as often as not unnoticed by the reader, it is much harder to disregard when the past and present meet in classical works that are adapted for the stage or screen. The re-creation of the characters from classical works in the theatre or cinema takes place through the art forms of our day, and since the poetics and the stylistic methods of classical literature are quite different from those of the theatre or the cinema, the viewer does not need to be a great connoisseur in order to feel how two ages are interacting. This interaction is not, however, the heart of the matter; the decisive role is played by the way in which the director and the team working with him see the classical work through the eyes of today, for it is what they see that gives its integrity to the film or the production.

A certain proportion of viewers and readers are convinced that an adaptation for the screen or stage must give the one and only possible interpretation of the work in question. But in the history of both these art forms there are hundreds of examples of widely differing but equally good adaptations of one and the same work. In fact the very development of the theatre is to a certain extent the story of the creative interpretation and re-interpretation of the best works of world drama. What we have been calling the "life"



our existence. But is everyone that this is an means to  
evolution that world culture is developing within a closed  
circle with each subsequent step in its history merely a  
variation of the previous stage. There is hardly any need to  
take the trouble to disprove that the facts of history all speak  
against it. And if the idea of similarity turns out to be of use  
to the scholar only for the study of the culture of antiquity,  
how are we to study the connections between our own age  
and those later periods which are nearer to us in time? We  
would need such a multitude of criteria that this very fact in  
itself would be a sign of their inadequacy.

Historical reality is also at variance with Markish's basic  
idea that while the conditions in which we live change,  
human nature remains for the most part unchanged. It is  
hardly likely that Markish would dispute the postulate of  
Marxist methodology that man and his consciousness are  
formed and determined by social relations. But it follows  
from this that there is no justification for isolating people,  
their psychology and their ethics from the social conditions  
in which they live and seeing in this division one of the  
characteristics of the development of society.

Among contemporary readings of the classics  
many attempts to modernise the philosophy of  
writers of the past. The essence of such a  
scholar finds ideas in the work of a classical author  
close to some present-day philosophical trend,  
thus the true connection between the classic and  
today. The Polish scholar Jan Kott in his book *Our Contemporary* (Warsaw, 1963) reviews  
work in the light of the conflict  
views of the historical development of  
supporters of the first of these claim  
according to set laws and that history  
conglomeration of chance events and  
process, with humanity moving forward  
progress. Those who support the second  
there is no inner meaning to historical  
progress is a mere illusion; and that hu-  
manity exists in a tragically meaningless existence. Kott a  
writer whose work reflects this



name not a few works which were enormously popular not so long ago, but which now have little to offer of interest for the reader. There is nothing extraordinary in this and it is quite logical and does not necessarily mean that there is something wrong with the works in question. The development of the reader's needs, although progressing steadily, moves in a zigzag of unexpected twists and turns.

Along with the works of the many national writers of our country, the Soviet reader finds much of interest in the work of the best authors from the other socialist countries and in the progressive literature of the whole world. In the elucidation of the active role of contemporary socialist literature and the progressive literature of capitalist countries, it is very important that we should make clear the general and specific ways in which works by writers from the different movements that exist in our day are accepted by various kinds of reader. This complex web of interwoven relationships is as varied as life itself and determines the social and aesthetic function of progressive literature in its basic principles and different manifestations.

The functional study of literature is a law unto itself, and is by no means an easy task. The difficulty lies first and foremost in the fact that the methodology of our research has not yet been fully worked out, and in the enormous amount of material that has to be digested before it can be put to use. To generalise this material demands great care, and the elimination of any fraction of subjectivism. However, all this will have no adverse effect either on the recognition of the functional method of study as one of the most important and promising areas of Marxist literary criticism, or on the intensive development of research in this area, both of which are basic to the study of literature and in its even closer ties with the development of contemporary culture.

## *Chapter Six*

# THE TYPOLOGICAL STUDY OF LITERATURE

### 1

Writers often blame in critics their predilection for general formulæ and their unremitting efforts to classify literary phenomena, arranging them under different headings and seeking for the laws which brought them into being, etc. After all, say the critics' critics, every talented writer is a unique artistic personality and cannot be squeezed into the straight-jacket of any one "heading." General postulates usually degenerate into mere schematic outlines which cannot take into account the unique qualities of each separate writer.

There is no need for us to contest the uniqueness of the writer's artistic personality, except to stress that this uniqueness is in no way a reason to suppose that the work of one writer is something isolated from and unconnected with the work of another. A writer's uniqueness does not mean that there are no connections between different writers beneath the surface, or that there are no common principles and tendencies to be found in their work. Not only do they exist, but they have an important part to play in the literary process in all the various forms which they may assume. When, for instance, we speak of a national literature and of its development, we are referring both to the work of its many major and minor writers, and to all that is common to different literary phenomena.



The relationship between what is held in common and what is individual, the general and the personal, is one which is raised time and again as we study the literary process. The history of the multinational literature of the Soviet Union, for instance, cannot be reduced merely to the development of its various national branches even when the connections between them are taken into account. To understand their historical movement as a whole we need to show the trends that they have in common. The history of world literature also calls for the close study of those phenomena and processes that mark rapprochement between national literatures, or between the groups into which they naturally fall.

This question of the general and the individual should be approached from the other side, too. Often, for instance, when speaking of the basic principles of socialist realism and its development, writers and theoreticians base their views upon *a priori* postulates without paying enough attention to the specific forms it has assumed under different historical conditions and the unique qualities of every nation. Obviously it is not enough today merely to repeat yet once more the old, well-worn formulae; we must generalize on the basis of actual literary material which will give us a broader and more profound view of the principal tendencies of socialist realism at the different stages of its development and of what is particular to the literature of one country or another, especially to the work of writers from capitalist countries.

All this goes to stress the importance of a typological approach to literary phenomena. We must, however, mention that this approach is regarded as a negative one not only by some writers but by some literary critics as well. The theoretical objections raised are usually in some way connected with the historical and philosophical ideas of Dilthey and Rickert, who asserted that the humanities, as opposed to the natural sciences, seek not to discover general laws but rather to study phenomena that are individual and unique. According to them, there is no justification in the humanities for any general conclusions or verdicts whatever, or for seeking the laws by which some phenomenon



expressed from a historical point of view. In 1957 the Soviet scholar Boris Reizov published the article "Literary Movements" in which he stated: "I deny the fruitfulness of the typological study of literary movements and in the meantime on the side of those who prefer the concrete historical approach."<sup>1</sup> According to this scholar, the chief fault of the typological approach lies in the fact that it regards literary phenomena as abstracted from the particular situation in which they are born or their relations with the life around them: in other words, it makes them completely meaningless. It is a typically metaphysical kind of thinking."<sup>2</sup> Reizov's article called forth a heated debate and his opponents showed even more unanimity in their criticism of the basic tenets of his article than they did in their positive reflections.

In his article "The Study of Literature in Our Age," published somewhat later (*Russkaya literatura*, No. 2, 1963), Reizov briefly reiterated the same ideas, showing that the debate was not yet over. As he put it: "each of the literary movements which play a part in any civilization has many meanings, depending upon the system, the social groups, the historical circumstances and the historical moment." That is why, he suggests, movements like classicism and romanticism have no typological meaning at all, they only have concrete historical meaning and content. Reizov recognises German, French, Polish or Russian romanticism but does not see romanticism as an international phenomenon or as a typological similarity.

But romanticism or classicism in one national literature or another are indeed typological similarities. Each of these movements, if we view it solely from the national point of view, includes writers who are artistically different, which is in itself an aberration from the principle of historical concreteness in the sense in which this is understood by Reizov. To be consistent one should not use terms like French, German or Russian romanticism or speak of the

<sup>1</sup> B. Reizov "Literary Movements", *Voprosy literatury*, No. 1, 1957, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 114.



[illegible][illegible][illegible]

They are wrong and because nothing is ever repeated in literature there are repetitions and these occur in several different forms. But the heart of the matter lies in the way we view the part they play within the overall literary process. Repetitions will occur in every creative undertaking but a broader than the confines of any particular work, be it the individual style of a writer or the national literature of a given period. However, the living growth of literature is by no means reduced to these repetitions. At the same time we know that every great work of literature calls forth a series of imitations which are nothing more than copies of something which already exists in its ideal form. Although this is also a kind of repetition it has nothing to do with mere art. True creative writing does not countenance such



problems. The typology of literary movements, for instance, naturally touches upon questions not only of their various types and the expressions they have found throughout world literature but also of the different types of, say, romanticism or realism including the purely national expressions of the two movements. Then there is also the question of the various formations within one literary movement or school and so on.

It may be that even more profound differentiations exist in the typology of genres not only because they are so varied by nature and because of the long history of so many of them, but also because of the complex transformation through which they pass as they change from one literary environment to another.

In order to make a typological study of these various literary phenomena it is very important and perhaps even imperative to hold at least these two basic principles: a) that we always keep in mind the specific nature both of literature as a whole and of its various aspects, and b) that we base our study on one or two principles. These two are connected. Literature, as a specific area of our spiritual culture, of itself demands that we adhere to such principles as we study it in all its diversity. Keeping to one set of principles does not mean slavishly looking at everything through the same pair of spectacles, as it were, so it is natural that these principles should modify as we study different aspects of the literary process. But only through the uniformity of the basic principles of typological study can we reach comparable results.

## 2

Let us take a closer look at some of the principles upon which the typological study of literature has always been based. One of these is that of a commonly-held outlook. In its pure form this principle does not come much into play, but it is rather popular in what we might call a "retouched version."

1. Lavretsky suggested long ago that in Russian literature there existed a trend of revolutionary democratic reason

which he saw represented in such writers as Chernyshevsky, Nekrasov, Herzen, and Saltykov-Shchedrin. This idea gained much popularity and at the same time met with serious objections, and the critics started to construe a school of revolutionary democratic realism in many other literatures according to Lavretsky's model.

The principle of isolating for study a school of revolutionary democratic realism is something distinctly connected with the writer's outlook, but this did not prevent Lavretsky from taking some particularities of this branch of realism from the point of view of typification as well. The logical application of this principle would demand that it be equally applied to other movements within Russian realism as well. Lavretsky did not, however, do this, but stopped short at simply pointing out that a critical realist school also existed alongside the revolutionary democrats: an obvious non-sensur

This was not, however, the end of his self-contradictions in his typification of reality. Herzen is very different from, say, Shchedrin, and it would be extremely difficult to place them within one movement. Writers, on the other hand, like Tomyalovsky, Reshetnikov and Nikolai Uspensky, who were not revolutionary democrats, are close in many important aspects of their work to Nekrasov, Chernyshevsky and Shchedrin.

The idea of ideological similarity was traced by D. Mirsky in *Literary Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 9, "Realism", Moscow, 1935) with more consistency but with a certain amount of vulgarisation of this principle. He found three basic types of realism in Russian literature: that of the bourgeois and the gentry, that of the revolutionary democrats and that of the proletariat. Without straying outside the field of general ideological judgements he could not characterise the features typical of one or another realist movement. This was impossible to do while he "lumped together", as it were, the work of, for instance, Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy into one category, that of the realism of the bourgeois and the gentry, without taking into account the profound individuality of the realism of each of these writers.







and that is all the more so of the other works of these great writers.

His desire to stress the similarities between completely different writers forces Pospelov rather to take liberties with the facts or to make use of general formulae which merely oversimplify the content of artistic creativity and the literary process as it is. As, for instance, he declares the ideological principles held in common by the "great patriarhals" and even the "democratic patriarhals", he justifies the patriarchal way of life and were severely critical of that section of the gentry which, distracted by the pleasures of the *beau monde* and of building a career, became more and more spiritually corrupt, losing its contacts with the people and misusing its power and wealth. However, in the criticism of those members of the gentry who entered the army or the civil service these writers did not go so far as true satire, and the part played by criticism of the rural type in their work is not large.<sup>1</sup>

Those who support this idea of ideological similarity as a typological principle do not take into account the fact that one and the same outlook or a related outlook can be expressed in literary forms that are completely different. Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau were very close in their ideas and views, but quite different in their work. Voltaire is usually placed among the classical enlightenment, Rousseau seen as a convinced sentimentalist and Diderot as one of the most outstanding realists of the Enlightenment period.

In this typology of literary phenomena from the point of view of similar outlooks we can clearly see that little account is taken of the specific nature of literature and that the artist's outlook is unjustifiably identified with his art. Besides all this, the principle of a similarity in outlook, however applied by the student of literary movements, offers no potential for the study of, for instance, the typology of genres or of the changing forms through which literature has developed in different periods of history, which is yet another proof of the inadequacy of this method.

<sup>1</sup> G. Pospelov, *op. cit.*



compulsory character of grammatical meanings," he writes "forces the poet to take them into account; he either unites for symmetry and respects these simple, reiterated and distinct schemes, based on the binary principle, or else he reacts against them and sets off in search of 'organic change'." If we can state that the principle upon which a poet bases his rhyme is either grammatical or else anti-grammatical, he never *agrammatical*, then we can apply this concept to the wider sphere of the poet's approach to grammar in general. There is a profound analogy here between the rule of grammar in poetry and artistic composition based either on an obvious or on a hidden geometrical structure or else upon a rejection of geometrical form. And if the principles of geometry (typological rather than metrical) contain 'magnificent necessity' for painting and the other visual arts, linguists see the corresponding 'necessity' for verbal action in grammatical meanings.<sup>1</sup>

The predeterminate nature of the linguistic forms used by the writer serves, as Jakobson claims, as the source and determining principle of his verbal construction and its inner harmony. And it is the grammatical forms and their combination that determine the very construction of a work of literature and its aesthetic properties. "When an unprejudiced, careful, detailed and unified description reveals the grammatical structure of a particular poem, the picture thus discerned of the choice, organisation and correlation of morphological classes and syntactic constructions can amaze the reader with its unexpected and strikingly symmetrical arrangements, its proportional constructions, its loose clusters of equivalent forms and its sharp contrasts."<sup>2</sup> Incidentally, these judgements make obvious the inability of the structuralists to explain the aesthetic qualities of works of literature. To announce that the whole effect of poetry lies in the relationship between morphological classes and

<sup>1</sup> R. Jakobson, 'The Poetry of Grammar and the Grammar of Poetry', *Poetics: Poetics: Elements* (Warsaw, 1961) p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 411.

syntactical parallels or contrasts means, in essence, to say nothing while giving the appearance of saying a great deal. The most fiery eloquence cannot prove to both the unsophisticated and the informed reader that, for instance, Pushkin's poem "I loved you" makes such a profound impression not through the emotions so vividly expressed in it but merely through the symmetry of its grammatical categories.

However, what interests us now is first and foremost an understanding of the structure of works of literature. Like the structure of other social phenomena, it cannot be reduced merely to the relationship between "pure" forms. When we speak, for instance, of the structure of capitalist society, what we have in mind is primarily its division into classes and only then the real connections and contradictions that are to be found between them. And in a work of literature, taking into account its unique and specific nature, structural relations concern not only form, but also content. Following this, structure is not something complete in itself, cut off from the real world and the world of art, but it carries a vital connection with the raw material of reality and with other artistic and literary phenomena.

Their defence of this idea of the self-sufficiency of the structure of a work of literature brings many neo-formalists to negate any typological generalisations and to see the work of art taken entirely on its own as the only aesthetic reality. Since this is so, when the adherents of structuralism and of the neo-formalist movements attempt some kind of literary comparison, they can offer us nothing but thin abstractions, devoid of any real content or significance. In the article quoted, Jakobson notes that he has analysed and compared the Husine Chorale, the poetry of two English lyricists, Sir Philip Sidney (16th century) and Andrew Marvell (17th century), two poems by Pushkin and poems by the Polish writer Norwid, the Bulgarian poet Khristo Botev, Alexander Blok and Ossip Mandelstam. And in all the works which he studied in this way, by writers from different periods and different nations, Jakobson saw the embodiment of the same "simple and distinct scheme, based on the binary principle", found syntactical parallels and sonal repetitions



development of the conflict determines not only the relationships and contradictions between characters, but also the correlation between the various sides and component parts of the work and its inner structure.

We should not identify the conflict with the plot, for they are far from one and the same thing. The plot, for instance, of *A Hero of Our Time* is made up of a series of separate and to a large extent independent episodes, each of which shows the hero not so much from the point of view of his everyday life among others as from that of his psychology. The plot of the novel as a whole is not directly aimed at disclosing the tensions between Pechorin and the society which produced him, those between the outstanding individual and society. But it is this which is the basic conflict in *A Hero of Our Time*, finding expression in all, even the most intimately psychological, of the scenes in the novel.

The plot of *Dead Souls* is developed as the travels of Chichikov and his meetings with landowners, bureaucrats and domestic serfs. However, the inner conflict of Gogol's "poem-novel" is not contained merely in the conflicts between a clever businessman, and the serf-owning landowners and stupid bureaucrats. The true conflict lies much deeper, in the sharp tensions between this moribund, parasitic world and the living strength of the nation, between "the masters of life", mercenary and worthless, and the Russia of the people.

The conflict also exists where there is no plot, for instance, in lyrics. Obviously, any conflict in a work of literature reflects the contradictions inherent in life itself. However, the ways and means by which the contradictions of reality are reflected in a work of literature show a wealth of diversity, as we well know. And they are diverse not only in different literary movements, but also within the bounds of one movement, for instance, of realism.

It does not, of course, follow from here that between the conflict and the means of its expression there are no inner connections. What we have in mind here is not so much conflict in its general, "sociological" form, as it were, but the conflict that is concretely expressed and developed within a particular work of literature. Between this concrete conflict





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The work of Lev Tolstoy examines not only the conflict between the individual and society, but also the individual's search for unity with the people through the re-assessment of all social establishments. If previously the individual, his development and his rights, had been the starting-point and the "norm" for a study of the life of society, Tolstoy, however close the attention he gives to man's spiritual development, no longer took the aspirations of the individual as his "norm." Tolstoy's social and ethical ideal is a shared life of justice.

Like many Russian writers, Tolstoy was a champion of the people. In *War and Peace* in particular he demonstrated its decisive role in the historical development of society. But this was not the only thing characteristic of Tolstoy as a writer. He gave a profound reflection of the disastrous effect upon the people of the social and spiritual oppression to which it was subjected: we have but to recall the popular scenes in *Resurrection*. Depicting the individual's search, the writer reached the idea of the historical inevitability of man's rebirth, a rebirth that is possible only as a result of renouncing "the madness of selfishness." In showing the tragic fate of ordinary people in contemporary society, Tolstoy reached a profound understanding of the absolute necessity for change in the life of the people, so that in his work the idea of the rebirth of man merged with the idea of the rebirth of the people as a whole.

Tolstoy undertook a courageous re-appraisal of the social, historical and spiritual values of the age and a critical review of all that went to make up the life of a society of ownership. It is this which gives us extraordinary breadth to his epic art. At the same time the embodiment of the idea of the individual's and the people's rebirth meant the closest attention to man's inner world.

shows the world viewed deeply, from all angles, the possibilities of the human personality, its potential for spiritual growth and for communion with the highest ideal of human life. Tolstoy is great historical materialist in the original connotation within his work of subtle psychological analysis and broad epic narration.

The epic and psychological realism of Tolstoy is not simply a continuation of the realism of Pushkin, Gogol and Lermontov. Already developed in the work of his predecessors, not only in Russian literature but in that of the whole world, the epic principle takes on new content and meaning in his work. In his psychological studies Tolstoy has something in common with both Stendhal and Leontov. However, the Tolstoyan "dialectics of the soul" is something completely new in literature, and his synthesis of the epic and the psychological opened up vast new potential for the aesthetic discovery of reality through literature.

At the start of the twentieth century Tolstoy's influence was felt more in West European literature than in Russian. We have only to recall the impetus given by the author of *War and Peace* and *Resurrection* to the work of Romain Rolland, Roger Martin du Gard, Anatole France, Galsworthy, Shaw, Heinrich Mann, Zolomski, Prus, Vaxon and many other writers from a variety of countries. Tolstoy's heritage is widely felt in Soviet literature, from the first steps towards its formation right down to the present period of its development. This bears eloquent witness to the greatness and real worth of artistic experience and the artistic discoveries for which Tolstoy was responsible.

The distinctive feature of Dostoyevsky's realistic works, on the other hand, is the depiction of the inherently tragic nature of human existence and of the human destiny in a society of private ownership. He paints a vivid picture of the sufferings of people brought upon them by social injustice, and shows the "humiliated and insulted" in their hopeless struggle against social evil. Sometimes, however, Dostoyevsky was inclined to view these conflicts as the age-old and inevitable drama of human society in general, and often the features of his own particular age took on for him the attributes of the eternal and unchanging.



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Chelton for his part turned his attention to other forms of reality and other questions raised by life. With the profundity and artistic expression that were typical of his work he depicted the vulgarities, phantasies and perversities of life and the way they come into conflict with the ideal and norms of healthy, creative living. He exposed to ridicule the stagnation, inertness and ignorance which existed in many different forms at the turn of the century. Stagnation and ignorance he contrasted with the growth of culture and learning and the progress of human society. Closely connected with this is his poetic elevation of work, which he saw not only as the cure for stagnation but also as the living source from which would spring new values for humanity.







## *Chapter Seven*

# PROGRESS IN LITERATURE AND ART

## 1

Is there such a thing as progress in art? Is not the application of the concept of 'progress' to the sphere of art merely an academic exercise? If on the other hand there is progressive development in the world of art and literature, then in what is it expressed and how is it connected with social progress? In the past few years these questions have been submitted anew to lively discussion at specialist conferences and in the press of many different countries.

We know that the question of progress in the life of society and in art has been a subject of speculation by scientists and philosophers ever since the time of the Enlightenment. In different periods of history it was viewed in different ways. In the twentieth century it has become truly a key question for the scientist and the philosopher.

The October Socialist Revolution was an important event in the life of society, profoundly affecting humanity's views both of the present and of the future. It gave great hope to millions throughout the world, hope that was immeasurable with the confusion and fear which the revolution engendered in the ruling classes, among those who were firmly wedded to the idea of private ownership as the basis of social system.

The minds of men were affected in a different way by the First and even more by the Second World Wars, which brought such disasters and suffering to many nations and sacrificed millions of lives. The danger of thermonuclear war that has arisen in the last decades brings to mind the

more of chance. In connection with this I'm thinking of a system. The choice is important partly also with regard to stages of art: a program or sequence of art is given and then some of these great work of art Raphael was long considered the high point of the Italian Renaissance. But such an interpretation makes hardly anything but a claim rather and the masters of the Quattrocento were superior. Lucas and Mantegna pursued differently from Raphael not simply because they were less experienced but because they wanted to express something different, something alien to the life and the outlook of the 15th century.<sup>1</sup> A new idea has been expressed by the 16th century. Just as Goethe said that there is no progress in art. There are only changes. There is, of course, progress in technique, but we cannot consider that Rembrandt embodies progress if compared with Caravaggio. They had a different approach to things, and the tasks they set themselves were different too.<sup>2</sup>

It would obviously be a fruitless task to set up the artists and writers of the past "in order of greatness" or create a kind of ladder with different rungs for different great artists according to the place they fill in the development of art. We could never prove, nor would we ever need to, who was "greater" or "more progressive" Goethe or Shakespeare, Beethoven or Mozart, Rembrandt or Leonardo da Vinci although this does not make it impossible or unnecessary to value differently the role and significance of different artists.

We could never compare the value of the work of Dostoevsky with that of Chekhov, while we can see obvious differences between the work of, for instance, Dostoevsky and Garshin from the point of view of artistry and from that of their historical significance. The fact of such comparisons, however, does not make the work of Garshin or of other such writers lose any of its own aesthetic value, it still has the power to attract the reader. Or we could cite

<sup>1</sup> I. Ehrenburg, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 464 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Les Lettres Françaises*, 1964, 19-23 novembre, p. 8.







but also these aesthetic achievements in the world of art which by retaining their significance over a long period of time characterize the growth of our artistic culture. Obviously, this comes about not through the unmanent movement of art but because art is a reflection of the movement of life and of the spiritual and aesthetic needs of society, and as such it is one of the most important expressions of our creativity and spiritual strength. The evolution of art does not clearly leave man and society do not stop at what has already been achieved. The artist's mind is attracted by what is new, seeking to discover it and to create spiritual and aesthetic values unknown before.

And although this combination of tradition with innovation is something not confined only to the sphere of art (similar processes are to be found, for instance, in the evolution of science), we are dealing here with a special case. In art the link with tradition is not limited to the previous experience and is not confined to the experience of any one artistic type or genre. We can find links between artists from different ages, between completely dissimilar movements and between different art-forms. In principle this link is not confined neither by space nor by time, though this does not mean that it is universally applicable to each and every artist.

The continuous movement of the process in general, and the role of tradition and of artistic innovation as a most important factor in artistic progress are denied by many of those scholars who take up an idealist stance. The English philosopher and art critic R. Collingwood insists that there are no hidden links between different works. "...One work of art does not lead to another; each is a closed monad, and from one monad to another there is no historical transition"<sup>1</sup> Collingwood completely denies any historical development in art. "Art, as art, has no history. Art means the aesthetic activity, imagination and imagination is the act of presenting to oneself a complete, self-contained, monadic world which exists only in and for that act... From the aesthetic point of view for which alone art exists as art,

<sup>1</sup> R. Collingwood, *Essays in the Philosophy of Art*, Bloomington, 1964 p. 152







progress in art is to be seen first and foremost in "the artistic assimilation of new facets of reality and of the new man, with art developing alongside the march of history, creating new means of expression and widening the sphere of aesthetic perception. All these facets of the innovatory development of art are naturally linked with the enrichment of its humanist content, connected ever more closely with the revolutionary changes in the life of humanity today" <sup>1</sup> As for the broadening of the boundaries to the study of reality through art as one of the characteristics of progressive development in art, the Bulgarian scholar K. Goranov has firm opinions: "The potential for the generalisation and transformation of reality into art grows with the passage of time. Artistic progress is to be seen first and foremost in the broadening of this potential" <sup>2</sup>

The historical and epistemological approach to the study of artistic progress is not only correct, but is also essential. However, in the form in which it is often applied it is inadequate on several different counts. The assimilation of new facets to reality cannot of itself be a determining factor in artistic progress. In discussion of this subject too little account is often taken of the results of the artist's work, that is to say the aesthetic treasures created by the artist, and they can be of differing value in the way they deal with what is new in life.

Equally unjustified are all attempts to reduce the evolution of art to a broadening of the potential for studying life through artistic means. This potential is not of itself one of the qualities of art. Admittedly, until it has been realised, there can be no talk of progress. But once it has been realised, it is the quality and level of the artistic generalisations and their social and aesthetic value that defines whether there has been any progressive movement. As we see it, this is one of the most important features of artistic

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<sup>1</sup> V. Shcherbina, *Levin and Problems of Literature*, Moscow, 1967, p. 34 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> K. Goranov, *The Image and Its Historical Existence*, Moscow, 1970, p. 449 (in Russian).

poetry is not harmonious whole and where the concept of harmonious content merely expresses itself. Expression is not with the future poem's depiction of the real world, it is making a true poem.<sup>1</sup> The other form of poetry, according to poetry, is created on the level of culture when the harmonious interaction of man's whole being is to be achieved, and the poet thereby reaches to the ideal of God's creation in the same thing given the depiction of the deed.<sup>2</sup>

Noting the specific features of poetry when being in different artistic movements, Schiller called one the realistic, the other idealistic. It is interesting to note that for Schiller's point of view, naive and sentimental poetry are the only two possible methods in which poetic creation arises.<sup>3</sup>

The concept of "style" has been an important one ever since the time of Winckelmann to define important periods in the development of the fine arts and of architecture. In this way the history of West European art is distinguished by the Romanesque, the Gothic, the Renaissance, the Baroque, the Classicism, and so on. Taken in so wide a sense the concept of style also includes general aesthetic principles and borders similar to a certain extent to what Schiller called "method". If we take into account the evolution undergone by the concepts of style and method and their differing content at least in some spheres of culture, it would be rational to describe important stages in the development of art as "trends" or "types" of artistic work. We naturally should keep in mind not only the processes that take place in some one sphere of art or another, in, for instance, literature, but also those that take place in all its different forms as well.

The question of the relationship between different stages in the development of art and between different types of work continues to be the subject of heated debate. Those who hold that there are two basic streams, realism and

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (Leipzig, 1929, S. 24-25).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., S. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

anti-realism, to be observed throughout the whole history of world art have no difficulty in resolving this problem. According to them, the realism that came into being in primitive art developed through many different periods. Each new period is a natural link in the chain that forms the gradual movement of art along an ascending line. As for anti-realism, they see its role in the historical process as something essentially negative. At best it emphasises the achievements of realist art. All this would be interesting in its own way if only it bore some relationship to reality. But, as the discussion on realism that took place in 1957 showed, this idea cannot hold up to serious criticism.

First and foremost, those who supported it were unable to prove that all important movements and significant works in world art were realist in their basic aesthetic principles. In their attempts to give a basis to their views, the champions of the "realism and anti-realism" theory have recourse to a free, if not to say arbitrary, interpretation of the most important processes of the history of world art. The first of these was their identification of realism with the life-truth. However, both during the discussion and afterwards it was shown with the aid of many examples that the life-truth may be expressed not only in realist art, but equally well in works from other art-forms. All this does not detract from realism itself its basic qualities and its historic importance.

The idea of various "types" of work is developed, especially with reference to literature, by L. Timofeyev. He considers that realism and romanticism are not only specific artistic methods, formed under particular historical circumstances, but also types of work which at different times in history have defined the characteristics and the basic features of the literary process. According to Timofeyev, these types of work "are to be seen in the most diverse forms and relationships in any artistic method that arises in the process of development of the history of literature, since in them are expressed the general features of the imagistic reflection of life itself".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> L. Timofeyev, *Soviet Literature. Method. Style. Poetics*, Moscow, 1964, p. 60 (in Russian).



said to disclose the real processes of life. We cannot regard, say, architecture as one of the means by which man reaches a cognizance of reality. In the same way we could never evaluate the decorative and applied arts from the point of view of the deepening of our knowledge of the world. But in other spheres of artistic culture, too, the character and role of the cognitive principle are not identical. It is easy to see that there are significant differences in this respect between music and the cinema, the theatre and sculpture, and so on.

It by no means follows from this, of course, that some art-forms are connected with the movement of life and therefore "take part" in the artistic progress while others are something to be seen as standing aside from both. The point is that life itself is something much broader than at times it would seem to the scholar, and the links with life itself and its reflection are more diverse than some theoreticians will allow. The content of life in the widest sense of the word includes, as we have already noted, not only the "visible" processes in the material reality around us, not only social and political relations, daily life and so on, but also the life of the human spirit, including those aesthetic needs which go to make up an essential element of this life.

Architectural works embody various general ideas of their time and the aesthetic outlook of the people of a particular period in history, but more important, they serve their practical needs, which also pass through stages of change. To a certain degree the same can be said of the decorative and the applied arts. From this point of view there is no doubt that they reflect the life of human society, but reflect it in a way that is all their own and each of the different art forms reflects the same things in its own specific way. Even in those spheres where an important part is played by the cognitive principle it is not to be found in "pure" form. In literature, for instance, the writer opens up the world of what is possible and desirable, and the artistic generalisation of what already exists is interwoven with the incarnation of the ideal. Severe and tragic truth does not exclude the most daring dreams, the unlikely and the fantastic. The



devoted much of their attention to the depiction of the life of the feelings and to man's tussles with an ascetic morality to create a "natural" man who would repudiate the accepted canons of the Middle Ages, classical authors give their main attention to the depiction of man's civic *predestination* and the embodiment of those ethical principles that arise out of his awareness of his duties to others and to society.

Significant in the work of classical writers is the depiction of heroes in conflict with characters who exemplify evil or a refusal to accept lofty moral principles. The high value which the classicists placed on the faculty of reason does not prevent their works from depicting burning passions, sharp conflicts and the stormy development of action. The classicists depict passion in its extreme and all-embracing manifestations, and in the best of their works this depiction remains profoundly convincing.

The classicists found their plots and heroes mainly in the world of classical history and mythology and in the past of foreign nations. There is no doubting, however, the vital link between their work and the time they lived in. In the literature of several different nations classicism arose against the background of a worsening crisis for feudal society, in an age of absolutism determined to subjugate both art and literature to its influence, a time when ideas and social or political movements were developing, opposed to both feudalism and absolutism. The historical and artistic meaning of the best works of writers like Corneille, Racine, Molière and Voltaire lies in the lofty examples they give us of human behaviour, in their criticism of spiritual and moral collapse and their condemnation of all kinds of particularism and aloofness from general principles in the life of men and in their call to social activity.

The mood of opposition to the established order and the spirit of the times that we find in classicism was combined with the reflection of the outlook that predominated, the ideas of absolutism. Depending upon how different countries were developing historically, these ideas affected the various literatures and individual classicists to differing degrees. Along with artists whose work vividly expressed humanist principles, classicism also included writers who



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The national character of art gives rise to close links between artistic progress and creative achievements in the art and literature of separate peoples. Attempts to achieve artistic progress without taking into account the specific historical development of the art of different

<sup>1</sup> A. Bryusov, *Selected Works* in 2 volumes, Vol. II Moscow, pp. 531-52 (in Russian).



age turned upon the field of literature. "The history of poetry," he noted, "is among other things the history of the gradual perfection of the medium of poetry. Just as contemporary man has many more means at his command in his struggle with nature than had his primitive ancestor, so the contemporary poet has more effective means with which to achieve his aims than those of previous ages. It might be that the poets of Greece, Rome and the Middle Ages were faced by the same themes as the writers of the 19th century explored, but in previous ages poets had not yet acquired the means of embodying these themes in words. Now, too, there are important artistic tasks which we are not yet capable of fulfilling not because particular poets lack the talent but because the technique of poetry still lacks the corresponding means."<sup>1</sup>

The discovery of new means of transforming life into art often comes about not suddenly but through a gradual build up of the various elements that go to make up such means. And the full aesthetic effect of their use is often felt only after the passage of time. Thus, the depiction of people and events from the point of view of "natural" man, a stranger to many of the conventions of life, was partly to be seen in, for instance, Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* then in Voltaire's *L'Ingenu*, then in the work of various other authors, but it was fully developed and expressed to perfection only in the work of Lev Tolstoy. "Technical" achievements are of great diversity and require more detailed study.

## 8

The national character of art gives rise to close links between artistic progress and creative achievements in the art and literature of separate peoples. Attempts to characterize artistic progress without taking into account the specific historical development of the art of different

<sup>1</sup> V. Bryusov, *Selected Works* in 2 volumes, Vol. II, Moscow, 1955, pp. 551-52 (in Russian).



even not to forget to take into the consideration the view that in the art of many Eastern countries including Japan, China and Iran, it never became the historical mission of the art of any India we could mention those of the perception that it is some deviation from the Renaissance and the same can be said of many other Eastern countries.

Recent times have seen lively discussion of the degree to which the ideas and artistic principles of the Enlightenment have found expression in the artistic culture of various countries and of the ways in which it is has come about. While recognising the specific ways in which these ideas and principles have developed in the art and literature of many countries both Western and Eastern scholars are rather inclined to regard them as something essential for the artistic evolution of any and every nation and we can see that the art of many Eastern countries survived quite happily without experiencing anything corresponding with the period of the Enlightenment.

In our days the question cannot but arise of the original and unique qualities of national art, especially where the intensive growth of the art and literature of developing countries which have not long been liberated from the colonial yoke is concerned. In connection with this Konstantin Fedin has written: 'It is hard to regard as anything but a mistake the determination of some Western scholars to see the same artistic forms consistently developing all over the world. Any national art if it is not merely to copy current Western fashions, will (according to this view) be closed as underdeveloped. But can we expect that in countries which are struggling for freedom from colonialism art is going to develop through the same stages as those through which it passed in the capitalist system? And is it imaginable that art in socialist countries should follow every twist and turn taken by the disorientated artists of the old world? Does not

<sup>1</sup> See *Problems of the Enlightenment in World Literature*, Moscow 1970 and 'Texts of papers read to the conference on the history of Eastern literatures' Moscow 1968 (both in Russian).



of realism. Here the combination gives rise to a new type of art, through which Polish writers expressed their critical attitudes to reality, their national feeling and their ideals of national liberation and independence.

This organic combination of romanticism and realism was to be seen not only in Poland but also, for instance, in the literature of the Southern Slavs. One of the particularities of the development of the literature of the Southern Slav nations,<sup>1</sup> notes the Bulgarian scholar Boyan Nichev "which is usually not taken fully enough into account by literary historians and theorists, is the unique combination of romanticism and realism based upon a fundamental category important for realism, the social determination of the fate of man and of character created by background".<sup>2</sup>

Describing the specific features of the development of literature in the Southern Slav countries, Nichev notes that here romanticism did not have to engage in struggle with classicism because the latter was either barely developed, or else did not exist at all. But there are distinctions to be drawn here, too. While, for instance, in Croatian literature romanticism gave rise to an independent stylistic system, in Bulgaria it created no widely developed stylistic formations. Appearing later here than in the rest of Europe, among the Southern Slavs romanticism and realism were not antagonists but to a certain extent they worked together.

This combination of realism with romanticism did not, of course, arise out of purely literary circumstances. It was brought about by specific features of the historical development both of Poland and of the Southern Slav nations, first and foremost by the large part played in their history and their culture in general by their struggle for national liberation. In the literature of the Southern Slavs was also reflected the particular relationship between patriarchal-cum-democratic principles and capitalist tendencies that was typical of the Southern Slavs in the second half of the

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<sup>1</sup> Boyan Nichev "Genesis and Originality in the Southern Slav Realism of the 19th Century", *Slavjanska filologija*, Vol. 11, Sofia, 1968, p. 122.





and the closer the links between his development, outlook and even the type of talent which he displays and the historical development of society."<sup>1</sup>

The true artist breathes the air of his time and creates beneath its indisputable influence. Even when the external trappings of the age are not reflected in his work, it is always to be felt in the inner orientation of his art, its imagistic structure and the feeling that lies behind it, and in the great artist's achievements.

In spite of this the artist's links with his age are often set up in opposition to the development and growth of art and literature. The German scholar Hauser, who has shown himself to be interested in a historical and sociological approach to art, writes: "Artistic creations are far more intimately linked with their own time than they are with the idea of art in general or the history of art as a unitary process. The works of different artists do not have any common aim or common standard, one does not continue another or supplement another; each begins at the beginning and attains its goal as best it can. There is not really any progress in art."<sup>2</sup>

Hauser has a very limited understanding of the concept of artistic progress, as though it were one thread, with works of art following on one from another united in their aims and in the fact that every new work of art is a continuation and a fulfilment of the previous one. Of course in art there is no such "progress." But the mistakes in his reasoning are obvious. He starts by forming a preconceived, speculative notion of artistic development, then remarks contented that there is no such progress in reality either. If, however, we start not from preconceived notions, but from an analysis of the facts, then artistic progress is, as we have seen, something that really happens in a complex and multiform way throughout the history of art.

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<sup>1</sup> V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, p. 502 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History*, Cleveland and New York, 1963, p. 36.

The talented artist's links with history and with his age not only are no obstacle to the development of art, but they are one of its essential preconditions and the source of the new imagistic generalisations which are the hallmark of a great master. As we have already noted, an opposition is often falsely set up between the depiction of what is historically concrete and works of timeless, eternal value which, it is claimed, are produced by artists who have withdrawn from the cares and troubles of everyday life. However, the artist who has no keen interest in his own age and its advancement is usually equally incapable of depicting that which is common to different ages.

The achievements of a talented master are indebted not only to his individual gifts, but also to the historical experience which belongs to the artist by virtue of belonging to the whole of the society of which he is a member. There is no contesting the fact, for instance, that the depiction in Soviet literature of the events of the October Revolution and the Great Patriotic War is being enriched and gaining profundity under the influence of the social and spiritual experience which we have acquired during the last two decades.

We should never over-simplify the links between a talented artist and historical reality, between the man and his age. They are not something limited to one time and place. Here we should recall Lev Tolstoy's profound observations about the artist's spiritual outlook. Tolstoy declared: 'For the writer to know what he should say, he must first know that which is typical of the whole of humanity but of which humanity is as yet still unaware. And to know this, the artist must partake in the life shared by humanity.'<sup>1</sup>

A social and humanist perspicacity is both the achievement and the triumph of a talented artist. It is this which gives true profundity to his work and historical significance to his artistic generalisations. Perspicacity is particularly essential in periods of intense social change and is closely linked with the artist's social outlook, his attitude to the

<sup>1</sup> L. N. Tolstoy, *Complete Works*, Vol. 50, p. 435 (in Russian).

sphere of the "imperative", which often traps the student of the study of evolution as it truly is.

One of the criteria of artistic progress often is whether on its own or else as part of some wider system of criteria is the degree to which a given work of art is humanist in ideas. But when they are regarded in reference to the imaginative structure of the work of art, something quite separate from it, humanist ideas, however great, cannot be recognised as the foundation upon which all artistic evolution is based. The reason for this is that they do not define the artistic qualities of a work and do not encompass all its different facets. In some types of art and genres they are not directly expressed. In painting, for instance, there are the landscape and the still-life, in which these ideas cannot be directly expressed, just as they cannot in the decorative and the applied arts.

But if it is impossible to speak of humanist ideas as definitive in artistic progress, there is no doubt at all that the existence of this progress is humanist. The greatest works created were not only made for people and to fulfil their spiritual and aesthetic needs, but they were created to perfect man and society, so that what is human in man may prevail over what is base and cruel within us. They embody the beauty that has been discovered and created by man. The objective meaning of the greatest artistic movements is the defence of man and his rights, the demand for social justice and the true flowering of the individual creative powers.

This does not, of course, mean that throughout the evolution of art the same ideas and ideals have been in vogue. Of course, they changed. But the humanist or greatest artists remained constant, and this determined that art would move forward along the same lines. And whenever, for whatever reason, the study of great human and social problems was in a period of crisis and degradation, in our present age, for instance, theorists strenuously preach the dehumanisation of art for the exclusion from it of man and of all his social activity, his feelings and his aspirations. It is hard the apologists for bourgeois art at

eval such things, they bear eloquent witness to the decadence of this art.

The upsurge in the democratic and socialist art of today finds its source in the fact that it is an art of profound interest in the lives of men and the fate of humanity, an interest which prompts progressive artists to make a thorough study of contemporary reality and contemporary man and to expose the tendencies and principles that determine historical development. The imagistic generalisations and aesthetic values which they create are distinguished by their wide spectrum of meaning and their truly democratic nature. Not only do they attract the attention of a wide section of the public, but they also exert a strong ideological and emotional influence. The evolution of contemporary art is determined not by those who would dehumanise it, nor by those who support the idea of empty experiments in form, but by artists who are closely linked with the life of the people and seek to contribute something active to the transformation of society and to the development of a new man.



he paved the way and took part in the development of the revolutionary movement" <sup>1</sup>

In the proclamation published by the Narodovoltsy at the writer's death, it was stated that "Turgenev was a man of integrity, herald of the ideals of several young generations, hard of their unprecedented, purely Russian idealism and voice of their inner torments and struggles be they expressed in terrible doubts or in a selfless readiness for sacrifice. The proclamation noted that Turgenev was an aristocrat by breeding and a moderate by conviction, and that "with his sensitive and loving heart he sympathised with and even served the cause of the Russian revolution" <sup>2</sup>

We know that the work of a great writer is often different from his political views, his work not only expresses particular ideas, but also contains the results of his study of life, being an artistic generalisation of the view of reality.

Turgenev's world of poetic images and their objective meaning is, as we have already noted, infinitely broader and more diverse than the political convictions to which he subscribed. "To reproduce truth and the reality of true life accurately and vividly," he wrote, "is the highest happiness for a man of literature, even if this truth does not happen to coincide with his personal sympathies" <sup>3</sup>

The unwavering devotion to truth that was as characteristic of Turgenev as it was of other outstanding Russian writers like Gogol, Nekrasov and Tolstoy arose from his keen awareness of social disaster, disaster for the people and a clear idea of the nature of the lofty calling of literature.

Turgenev was a writer of social and psychological dynamism. Without centring his attention on social changes, or historical upheavals, he always strove to characterise the development of the individual and of society as a natural and a historical process. In this development the individual often comes into conflict with society with

<sup>1</sup> *Turgenev in the Memoirs of Revolutionaries of the 70s*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1980, p. 77 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 4.

<sup>3</sup> I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 349 (in Russian).



his expression in a broad-based analysis of various facets of man's social existence, always seen from the point of view of the changing historical perspective

The main criteria by which Turgenev judged the individual's aspirations were his attitude to the interests of society, his devotion to justice, his spiritual honesty and the part played by man in the eradication of evil. From this point of view he depicted both the brave deeds of heroes who were dissatisfied with the life around them and the disappointment of "superfluous men", the lack of faith to be seen in various kinds of sceptic

In his depiction of the moving forces behind society and of the life of individuals within it, and in the disclosure of their inner world Turgenev followed his own distinctive rules. He was interested first of all in the inner make-up of the individual and the relationship between his character and the influence on it of the world around him. He was convinced of the large part played in the formation of the individual's inner make-up by upbringing and youthful impressions. But it is man's psychology which determines his behaviour and the way he runs his life

Turgenev became a mature artist and true master of his craft at the end of the 1840s and the beginning of the 1850s. His artistic development ran to a certain extent parallel to the artistic evolution of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. However, he was untouched by both the analytical approach to the individual psychology that we can already see in the prose of Lermontov and by the profoundly psychological approach that is so strongly expressed in the work of his most distinguished contemporaries. Turgenev was a more direct descendant than either Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky of the traditions of Pushkin insofar as the depiction of the human psychology is concerned, and he developed these traditions most fruitfully

Psarev, giving his views on the novel *Fathers and Sons*, noted: "Turgenev shows us only the conclusions reached by Bazarov, and we see only their external side, that is to say that we hear what Bazarov says, and know how he acts and behaves with different people. There is no psychological analysis, no composite account of Bazarov's thoughts, we





"Lights", "The Paradox", and so on. There are direct references to *On the Eve* and the short story "The Threshold" in Korolenko's "The Strange One".

Bunin's close similarity to Turgenev would seem first and foremost to lie in his descriptions of village life and his work on "nests of the gentry", showing the relationship between landowner and peasant. Although there are, of course, important thematic and artistic connections to be discerned here the most profound evidence of Turgenev's traditions in the work of Bunin is probably to be found in his depiction of the elemental quality of human feelings and passions which leave their life-long mark and in his treatment of the theme of man and nature. This is probably why the work of Bunin which displays most clearly Turgenev's influence is *The Life of Arsenyev*,—more so, anyway, than any of the author's earlier works. Here we can clearly see echoes of Turgenev's *Spring Torrents* and *Smoke*.

Soviet literary critics have done almost no work on the connections between Turgenev and Soviet literature, a subject that would be of great and topical interest. Among the authors who have been fruitfully influenced by Turgenev we could cite Paustovsky, Prishvin, Sokolov-Mikolov and Kazakov, though they are by far not the only writers to have been influenced by the author of *Fathers and Sons*, especially if we include in our survey not only Russian literature but that of all the other nationalities in this country as well. Vulgarising judgements of Turgenev have a detrimental effect upon the discovery of direct connections between his work and that of Soviet writers. The part played by Turgenev's traditions and those of other great Russian writers in the development of Soviet literature is an important subject which has yet to be finally exhausted.

Turgenev was the first important Russian writer to be widely acclaimed abroad. His works were the first to give foreign readers a broad picture of Russian life and to bring Russian letters to the forefront of world literature. Turgenev's world fame was based first and foremost on what was inherent in his artistic personality, and on the



expressed in his work. But they are, of course, not simply a cut-and-dried schema "lacked on" to human characters to classify them according to a preconceived scale. Turgenev's view of the human personality was itself formed under the influence of his observations of the life of society, and reflects its basic tendencies. But in real life the different types of human behaviour exist not only in their absolute forms but in many modifications, combinations, interrelations and inner contradictions. By noting the characteristics of the two basic, mutually opposed social and psychological motive forces as he saw them, Turgenev built on them a vivid multitude of human characters that in one way or another reflected the main contradictions of life as they presented themselves to him.

We would be wrong to see Turgenev's view of Hamlet and Don Quixote as the apotheosis of the practical, businesslike outlook and a criticism of "maximalist" tendencies. Y. Mann in his article "Bazarov and Others" puts forward the idea that the most important thing in Turgenev's conception is the constant need for action. As he puts it "All in all, we could say that Hamlet and Don Quixote as Turgenev sees them are close to the traditional distinction between the sober man and the man of extremes. But this distinction is drawn with the accent more strongly than ever before on 'action'. Turgenev's analysis is totally diffused with this demand for action."<sup>1</sup>

But can we really reduce Turgenev's view of Don Quixote simply to a defence of action and to an extolment of the results which this action brings? It would hardly seem so. Turgenev thought so highly of Don Quixote not because he is occupied in real affairs, for in fact he is far from the world of action and affairs, the writer was attracted by his selflessness, his devotion to his ideal and his willingness to undergo anything in the defence of truth and justice. Not for nothing does Turgenev stress that "most important is the honesty and the strength of the conviction" while the result is in the hands of fate.<sup>2</sup> Nothing was further from

<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Literature*, No. 10, 1968, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> *I. S. Turgenev, Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 174 (in I).

but were the two characters — Don Quixote and Hamlet — mutually complementary. Arguing the Quixote has the obvious advantage. Nevertheless the fact that both types are shown as equally essential and mutually complementary. Don Quixote is a greater responsibility than Hamlet. It is in Don Quixote that Turgenev found the principle of movement and not the one essential for Russian progressives who had been won through philosophical search and reflection and not argument doubt and lack of faith in their own strength. But why should it be that Turgenev depicted Hamlet and Don Quixote as mutually complementary? The article "Hamlet and Don Quixote" gives no grounds for this conclusion whatever. Here they are merely described as two different types of human behaviour that are at opposite poles from one another.

Mann only succeeds in closing the gap between Hamlet and Don Quixote by "adding" discretion to Hamlet and "renouncing" his extremism and maximum from Turgenev's Don Quixote, by which path he arrives at his "demand for action" (though what action, exactly, is not clearly defined). There is, however, no justification for

<sup>1</sup> *Novum*, No. 10 1968, p. 243.

making such transformations even when they would seem consciously arranged for the drawing of parallels with contemporary ideas, in the case that of "superfluous men."

Action and inertia, will and spontaneity are qualities of the Turgenev characters which have been analyzed time and again by literary critics. It is much more rarely that one is paid to the ethical principles which are manifest in Turgenev's work or to the characters' understanding of their calling in life or their relations with other people and with the world around them.

The overriding interest in Turgenev's expression of the theme of will and spontaneity and of action in life lies not the writer up as the hero of the "superfluous man." But this traditional formula is not only one-sided, it is in many ways simply incorrect and, what is more important, obscures our understanding of the leading principles behind Turgenev's work. To be sure the writer depicted "superfluous men" their unenvied state and inadequacy in the face of reality. Artistic generalizations of these specific forms of human existence and of their psychology are of great value both in terms of life and of aesthetics. However, we must start by pointing out that these characters are not all exactly alike and that there is much more to them than simply their inadequacy in the field of practical action. Moreover, Turgenev often saw a similarity between his "superfluous" and his "practical" characters that made both types negative in respect to the idea of social progress. And finally, an essential point, Turgenev's work is filled with very vivid characters of a completely different make-up.

While Russia was freeing herself from the fetters of the feudal, serf-owning system and starting out on a new stage of her historical development, Turgenev saw scepticism, a lack of faith, and "Hamletism" in all its various forms as a real obstacle to the renewal of the life of Russian society. In earlier periods like the 1830s, bitter scepticism and a mercilessly analytical approach to life were one of the ways in which progressives showed their refusal to accept the realities of the Russia of the time of Nicholas I. But at that time bitter scepticism was combined with impassioned notions on the future of the country and of the rising

that is, it is a doctrine which states the position of the individual as a member of the social group, and itself justifies the group.

But as Turgenev's analysis of the demand of the "group" is a little more developed in *Hamlet* than in *Dan Quixote*, it is natural to suppose that Turgenev was to some extent aware that the two are both products of the same social demand of that general character with which both of our novels begin. And Turgenev's solution of the Hamletian problem is in many respects similar to the solution which the novel demands. Both seek to show a man with profound inner life and high moral standards, the character of whose personality is determined by the nature of the culture in which he lives. Both are based upon the same ethical and social assumptions. Thus we have now identified the general nature which is presupposed by Turgenev's handling of the two novels. But we have gone no deeper.

In tracing the distinction in which Turgenev distinguishes between the two characters, I have suggested that Hamlet and Don Quixote are mutually complementary although Don Quixote has the obvious advantage. Now, looking at the two characters again, we observe as equally essential and mutually complementary that Quixote is of greater real significance than Hamlet. It is in Don Quixote that Turgenev found the principle of movement and will that was so essential for Russian personalities who had been through philosophical search and reflection and rich unguaranteed doubts and lack of faith in their own strength. But why should it be that Turgenev depicted Hamlet and Don Quixote as mutually complementary? The article "Hamlet and Don Quixote" gives no grounds for this conclusion whatever. Here they are merely described as two different types of human behaviour that are at opposite poles from one another.

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<sup>1</sup> *Annals* No. 10, 1963, p. 249

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1920-1921

## DOSTOEVSKY AND HIS LITERARY HERITAGE

### I

Time is a stern judge and a wise one. It consigns to oblivion the names of some public figures, completes or revises the judgement of others that has come to be accepted and preserves in grateful memory the names of those whose ideas and whose work have made an active contribution to social progress and who enrich our culture with new scientific and artistic achievement. Time separates work of true value from the ephemeral and the insignificant and what is true from illusions and errors.

It often happens in art and literature that the work of some artist is at first wildly popular and then seems to fade and no longer to excite any real interest from readers or viewers. Often, however, just the opposite is true. The influence of some works of art not only does not wane, but it grows stronger and stronger, as happens with the work of the greatest writers and artists.

Even while Dostoevsky was still alive his work struck the deepest chords in the hearts of his readers and was highly valued both at home and abroad. But the fame which his work enjoys today all over the world is incomparably greater than it was while he was writing his great novels and stories. Since that time his art has gained world-wide recognition.

The ever wider and more profound influence exerted by the work of a great artist upon subsequent generations does not mean that everything in it stands the test of time to an identical degree. This literary heritage is somewhat uneven in content. Some of its elements cease to carry out



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These months were in the company of people linked with the life of his time. His own feelings concerning the nature of that life, the facts of his biography, the problems facing him everywhere all this came a part in his work as a publisher and promoter. These months were a part of a social context, in which social characters are needed to look at the ground of his social reality, and that time became an integral part of the spiritual life of Russian society.

But the social orientation of a great writer does not mean that he is confined within the frame of what is unique and peculiar to one particular age alone. The wider the writer's artistic horizons, the more profound will be his study of his particular age and the closer his links with the future. The work of Chukovsky encompasses many examples of such and phenomena that were typical of the Russian society of the 19th century. Reflected in it are the characteristic features of its feudal and serf-owning structure and the conflict between differing social aspirations to be seen in Russia at the period when the bourgeois system was developing space.

Dostoevsky viewed those processes which emerged in Russian social reality not as something isolated from what was going on elsewhere, especially in Western Europe, but as vitally and mutually connected with the outside world. The writer was constantly stressing what was peculiar to development both at home and abroad, but his main concern was to show the general outline of the life of man, not so much the external realines of changing conditions in everyday life as social conflicts and important features in human relations and in man's psychology.





another world than the plain everyday life of the world that  
exists around him? even though it is not there.

That is one of the things that he did at Petersburg and I am  
not forgetting. It is always such a shock upon them, especially  
when they are used to suffering. The writer depicts a kind  
of protest and something more, a life where  
suffering and suffering itself keeps him suffering on the same  
and painful way.

It is this is Dostoevsky and his world are concerned  
only by these great material problems. They are concerned  
to find and make his suffer by the suffering in the possible  
that exist in a human world. Dostoevsky's suffering is not  
and therefore and what lack of respect, they are regarded  
more as so much useless garbage. The world of the  
"little man" makes themselves a part of the suffering  
is deeply humiliating in Dostoevsky's human form  
because of the inner sense of human dignity that he  
never has understanding their world oppression.

The writer shows that in spite of their poverty and  
and humble existence, their feelings and desires live on  
the hearts of "little men". He himself tries to understand what  
is happening to them and around them. The idea that the  
structure of life is something preordained and that we must  
live to our fate is joined by a note of protest, an awareness  
of the injustice that is constantly taking place in society. But  
the artistic and world-historical significance of Dostoevsky's  
first and truly great work, which struck a chord in society as  
soon as it was published, lies not so much in the protest of  
the "humble man" himself as in the disclosure of the drama  
of his life and the writer's profound sympathy with his  
sufferings.

The life of the destitute became one of Dostoevsky's most  
important subjects. It is expressed in other works of the 40s,  
like the "Petersburg poem" of *The Double* and the story  
*Nikolai Nekhlyudov*. But this subject was used most expres-  
sively in the works written later, during the 60s and the 70s.

For his part in the activities of the Petrashevsky circle  
Dostoevsky was arrested in 1849 and sentenced to death, a  
punishment which was then commuted to exile with penal  
servitude. He served his sentence in Omsk jail for four

years. Here he came into contact with conditions, relations between people and human types, which made a searing impression upon him. Later, in 1861-1862, he put his impressions of what he had seen, his observations and his meditations, in short, all that he had been through into the book *Notes from a Dead House*.

In the very structure of the narrative the writer stressed the book's verisimilitude and documentary quality, which in no way, however, excluded but on the contrary made for profound artistic generalisations of this raw material taken from real life. Remarking of the strong emotional impression made by *Notes from a Dead House*, Herzen called it a "terrifying book", comparing it with Dante's *Inferno* and Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*.

Dostoevsky's depiction of the convicts and of those whose job it was to guard them presents a special world which seems like a concentration of all social vices. The book is a striking picture of the loss of humanity, a picture of cold cruelty and calculated bestiality. This loss of their humanity has affected both the masters of the "dead house" and its inmates. Giving us the life-stories of many of those who had been sentenced to servitude, their bloody deeds and at the same time the mortal sufferings which the prisoners underwent, the narrator remarks in grief: "It is hard to imagine the extent to which it is possible to distort human nature".

The narration of *Notes from a Dead House* is coloured by tragedy. At the same time in this kingdom of darkness and despair the writer found not only a gleam of human feelings, but also men of inner integrity, interesting men coming from the people who remained unaffected by the corruptive influence of evil. In the hearts of these convicts, "in the most oppressed of spheres", as the narrator puts it, we find "such a richness, such feelings and heart, such an understanding of their own and others' suffering, that it opens your eyes and at first you find it hard to believe what you have seen and heard for yourself".

The life of the humble and the unfortunate is depicted with a sharp eye for what is socially significant and with emotional tension in the novel *Crime and Punishment* (1866). Twenty years lie between the writer's first depiction of the

humble man' and *Crime and Punishment*. It was a time of profound changes in society. Of paramount significance were those features of social and spiritual life which had come into being under the influence of capitalist social relations. These changes were to be most sharply observed in St. Petersburg, where new and tragic conflicts arose alongside the contradictions that were already inherent in the life of the capital.

Among the unfortunate heroes of *Crime and Punishment* we find not only the poor, who suffer the unrelenting bitterness of their unchanging lot, but also those humble people who experience with especial keenness the cruel power of money, of the system of buying and selling. Among them is Sonya Marmeladova, who is forced out onto the streets in order to earn her daily bread.

In the face of the all-pervading cult of mercenary calculation and indifference to anything that does not lead to gain, the poor are robbed of any hope for the future or for any significant change in their situation. The feeling of hopelessness that pervades them is a function of their life and everything about it. The elder Marmeladov, meditating on the subject of compassion and help, says to Raskolnikov: "Everyone needs somewhere he can go to. There comes a time when you've just got to go somewhere!" But as it turns out, it is hopeless to expect either compassion or help from anyone else. "Do you understand? Do you understand, Sir?" exclaims Marmeladov, what it means when there's nowhere to go."

But if the profit principle holds sway over the prosperous, among more humble people true selflessness is often found. Sonya Marmeladova becomes a prostitute not only to feed herself, but in fact to save her father's family from starvation. And in her desire to help her mother and brother who have nothing to live on, Dunya Raskolnikova is ready to sacrifice herself and prepared to marry a man whom she does not love but who has money. However particular this self-sacrifice, Dostoyevsky sees in it an obvious manifestation of nobility and generosity. Marmeladova and Raskolnikova are depicted as women of inner purity, sensitivity and kindness.



... of the bourgeoisie because of its own individualism in the sphere of its response and in fact its refusal to accept the basic principles and forms of social behaviour which were a direct result of the bourgeoisie and its practical application in various spheres of life. In F. Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* (1864) we see the bourgeois and anti-bourgeois and are even two very proper subjects for concern - these are the two main parts of every proper matter and each of the two has its own system of the hard working and of the idle, the conscious and the unconscious. Explaining the meaning of these concepts, the writer writes that the two forms ideas of the bourgeois order that replaced the previous system at the end of the last century and it has become the leading idea of the whole of the present century throughout Europe.

Ways of thinking and acting that are bourgeois in essence are to be found not only among the bourgeois, a word of a Dostoevsky, they have been taken up by people from every other social strata as well, along with the individualism that is the dominant feature of the bourgeois' spiritual and moral make up. It was primarily this expansion of the individual attitude to things that Dostoevsky noted, expressed in differing social circumstances and especially in non-bourgeois circles where it is no simple phenomenon, but one with many aspects and inner contradictions to it.

The philosophy of egocentrism is very well expressed in *Notes from Underground* (1864). The hero of this work is in a state of profound inner alienation from other people. Nothing in the world has any value to him except his own self and his personal interests. Underground man is not inclined to see any particular merit in himself. On the contrary, he is constantly admitting his base qualities with the aggressive "I'm perfectly well aware that I'm a scoundrel, a bastard, an egoist and a sloth". This is not just

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Notebook, 1877, 1880 and 1881* Moscow-Leningrad, 1929, p. 87 (in Russian)



and of the fact that what struck him most was "the principle of abstinence, of urgent self-preservation, of self-interest and self-definition within one's own ego".<sup>1</sup>

The depiction of underground man is a live echo of these opinions. Concrete historical phenomena served as the basis for the character and it is of broad significance as a generalisation.

Dostoyevsky gave us a whole gallery of extreme individualists. Amongst them are the acquisitive, the predator, the egocentric, the hypocritical and the egoistically cruel Prince Valkovsky in *The Insulted and Humiliated* is shown as a true predator, constantly feathering his own nest and engaged in what Dostoyevsky calls "self-industry". The thirst for acquiring and multiplying his riches has a constant hold over him. He strives to increase his fortune so as to live in luxury and gaiety, and will stop at nothing in the fulfilment of his aims.

In contrast with the "honest" underground man Valkovsky usually conceals his true thoughts and plans. Only when for some reason it seems expedient does he remove his hypocritical mask. In conversation with the writer Ivan Petrovich he announces: "Everything and everyone exists for me. 'Love yourself' is the only rule I recognise." Valkovsky has freed himself from many of the "shackles" and responsibilities that are inherent in the relationships between people. "I never had any conscience qualms about anything. I will agree to anything that's to my advantage."

In Dostoyevsky's descriptions of the individual cut off within himself and his violations of human norms the moral principle is always expressed in one form or another. The ethical defect in the philosophy of the underground man is manifested in the exposure of the extreme misanthropic conclusions to which he arrives, and Valkovsky's predatory and "organising" individualism is exposed through comparison with the completely different principles according to which the other characters in *The Insulted and Humiliated* act. The moral criterion is also clearly to be seen in, for

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dostoyevsky, *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, Moscow-Leningrad 1926, p. 85 (in Russian).

instance, the depiction of such an extreme egoist and renegade as Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment*.

Svidrigailov recognises no moral principles. Like other egoists, he is absolutely convinced that only his self has true significance, along with his desires and his will. Negating all outside imperatives and demands he has no wish to deny himself anything whatsoever, sure that all is permitted to him in this life. A spoiled sybarite, Svidrigailov is the slave of lustful concupiscence and a thirst for pleasure. In his efforts to satisfy these and his desire to demonstrate his power over others he has no difficulty in encompassing the basest actions and does not stop even at committing crimes. Svidrigailov is depraved, a scoundrel and a cynic.

Empty inside, believing in nothing, he finds himself at a spiritual dead end. It is at this point that his interest in the lives of others, in those of Sonya Marmeladova and of Katerina Ivanovna's children, sparks up. This interest cannot and does not change Svidrigailov's character, but it throws somewhat into relief the immorality of his "usual" actions. However, he is much more fully exposed through the depiction of conflicts between him and the other characters in the novel and the principles by which they run their lives. It is especially clearly seen in the contrast drawn between his baseness and the high moral qualities of Dunya Raskolnikova and Sonya Marmeladova.

Dostoyevsky gave a profound portrait of the self-willed and anti-humanitarian desires of the alienated individual while at the same time showing the stormy, individualistic protest called forth by a keen awareness of social injustice. The most important features of the spiritual make-up of Rodion Raskolnikov (in contrast to the convictions of the egocentrics) are functions not of being bound up in one's own self or of indifference to the sufferings of others: they are to be seen in the keenness with which he is aware of all human suffering.

Raskolnikov is himself one of the disinherited and the humiliated. But his sorrow and spiritual sufferings are born not only out of the harshness of the conditions in which he himself lives and not only out of the trials to which he is subjected, but also out of the i

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be? What are the heights of calm grandeur from which you offer me your wise prophecies?"

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A significant place in Dostoyevsky's work of the 60s and 70s is occupied by the depiction of social turmoil and the study of human alienation as one of the widespread processes of life. The writer was interested not only in the concrete forms in which these were to be seen, but also in their significance for humanity as a whole. The horrors of social reality and the increasing gulf between people were vividly expressed primarily in *The Idiot* (1868). Of the conception of this work Dostoyevsky wrote: "The thought behind the novel is one that I have long cherished, but such a difficult one that it took a long time to pluck up the courage needed to take it up." The main idea in the novel is to depict a positive character, a wonderful man. There is no harder task on earth, especially in this day.<sup>1</sup>

But the conception itself arose out of the writer's sharp awareness of life's disharmony, and he did not imagine realising it without depicting the way life develops and the contradictions inherent within it, all that was far from ideal, far from "positive" that Prince Myshkin, the hero of the novel, comes into contact with. And he comes into contact with various social phenomena and with people from differing backgrounds and with differing aims.

*The Idiot* reveals a complex pattern of prolonged conflicts and various kinds of "intrigue", unavoidable confrontations and personal scandals. They are all based on the play of interests which essentially move the characters and the power of feelings which is characteristic of others. The writer judgements, extreme perceptiveness and emphasis upon their passage of the social class stand cheek to cheek with the fire of true passions. But because the central place is occupied by the self-asserting and

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dostoyevsky, "The Idiot",  
p. 21 (in Russian).

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1. The first of these is the fact that the system is not self-sufficient. It is dependent on the outside world for many of its raw materials and for many of its finished products. This is a serious disadvantage, especially in times of international tension or war.

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Through his profound analysis of the extraneous causes hindering the work of the movement which is the way to the way of putting into use all that is best in man, and to release him of his obligations to the task of overcoming evil. In his approach to the problem of leading humanity to a deeper state of awareness. Dostoevsky's answer, as we have already seen, between intelligent protest and the idea of the possible, man of faith, between an awareness of man's potential for spiritual and moral perfection and doubt in the

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dammars, *Compounds of Gold*, Vol. 4, p. 98 (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1955).

possibility of this perfection. In his work protest and revolt are much more forcibly expressed than humility. Raskolnikov's and Ivan Karamazov's angry indictments of the society in which they live are irresistible. And those of Dostoyevsky's characters who display great spiritual strength and moral conviction, like Nastasya Philippovna, the heroine of *The Meek One*, Alyosha Karamazov and Sonya Marmeladova, characters who stand opposed to the sceptical view of human nature, are all replete with the highest artistic truth.

And however strongly this scepticism is sometimes felt, faith in man and in the future of humanity prevails. In the story "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" (1877) there is a clear expression of the idea that people can be beautiful and happy without losing their ability to survive on earth, and that evil could never be considered man's normal condition. Expressing his hopes for a better future for Russia and for the Russian people, Dostoyevsky wrote: "I could never understand the idea that only one tenth of the human race can achieve their full potential, with the other nine tenths condemned to exist as nothing but the means and material by which this is to be accomplished while themselves remaining in darkness. I do not want to live and think except in the hope that all our ninety million Russians (or however many there might be) will one day be educated, made human and happy."<sup>1</sup> The writer dreamed passionately of the unity of all mankind and of brotherly concord between nations.

All this led to his great interest in the ideas of a socialism and in the revolutionary struggle. The writer often refers to them in his essays and articles, and they are the object of heated discussion for the characters of many of his works, including *The Adolescent* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. But even before these two works came to be written, Dostoyevsky had published *The Possessed* (1871-1872). In this novel he made wide use of material from the *Nesobyt*, that is, the story of a group which through its leader, Nesobyt, had close links with Bakunin, the ideologist of international anarchy.

<sup>1</sup> I. M. Dostoyevsky, *A Writer's Notebook*, P. 1, 1876, Moscow-Leningrad, 1979, p. 173 (in Russian).



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<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dostoyevsky, *A Writer's Notebook, 1873, 1876*, Moscow (Leningrad, 1929), p. 175 (in Russian).



want to reduce everything to amorphous in order to create anarchy in morality, possess bourgeois immorality at its most extreme." And in the same place, evaluating the opinions of Bakunin's followers on the basis of the social organisation of the future, they add: "What a beautiful model of barrack-room communism!"<sup>1</sup>

Dostoyevsky associated the anarchic expression of social protest with revolution and with socialism in general. In anarchic protest he saw the basic expression of the ideas of socialism and revolution, and he wrongly attributed the characteristics of this protest to the whole of the revolutionary democratic and socialist movement both in Russia and in the West. Of itself, however, this attribution did not mean that Dostoyevsky abandoned his task of exposing the basic principles upon which capitalist society is built, the basis of a society of ownership in general, or of criticising the moral decay evident in the bourgeois society of the time. Moreover, both in his depiction of anarchic "supermen" and in their demonstration of their self-will we can clearly see the anti-bourgeois orientation of his artistic ideas. When bourgeois scholars concentrate primarily upon *The Possessed*, they are deliberately masking the most important thing about the writer's work: that Dostoyevsky dissected through analysis and "debunked" the very phenomena by which they are attracted.

In his defence of the ideals of social justice and his attempts to find the way to overcome evil, the writer placed great significance on the formation and consolidation of the moral and truly human basis upon which the life of society is to be founded. In this he was near to Lev Tolstoy. He rejected "political" socialism primarily because it seemed to him to ignore the ethical principles that determine the essence of human relationships and the unity of men. And the writer's constant argument against socialism was that socialists seemed interested exclusively in satisfying man's material needs, in the bread needed to feed millions of hungry and exhausted people, while forgetting about their spiritual and moral development.

<sup>1</sup> Marx/Engels, Works, Ed. 18, 5: 425.



European writers have long been showing that the Russian writers' radical political intentions in the area of revolutionary struggle and socialism. The point of view, dictated by their interest in the end of socialism, has nothing in common with the truth. In *The Possessed* Dostoevsky gives a true picture of some of the essential features of socialism and of the psychology and attitudes of its adherents. The revolutionaries depicted in the novel are their basic task is saving the seeds of general disaster and completely destroying the social order. They show little interest in the future of society and have but a bare idea of what it will be like. These revolutionaries are prepared to use any means of achieving their destructive aims without taking any account of moral standards at all. They seem to act on the principle that "the end justifies the means." Their leader, Piotr Verkhovensky, has recourse to deceit and perversion. For "revolutionary" discipline he substitutes the constant terrorization of his comrades-in-arms, strengthening their union with spiced blood. Verkhovensky and his friends are convinced that it will be an easy matter to bring off a coup and carry out a "shake-up" on a scale that has never been seen before. As they put it, "We'll start in the spring, and it'll all be over by autumn."

But if in his exposition of the ideas and methods of the Nechayev group Dostoevsky based what he wrote on real facts, he forsook reality when it came to the depiction of their spiritual make-up by making of them a distillation of all that is bad although in fact even if they chose the wrong path, they were motivated subjectively by an ideal of the common good.

It is obvious that Dostoevsky's revolutionaries are a far cry from the generations of socialists and revolutionaries that emerged from the ranks of the Russian movement for democracy and liberation, born of the international proletarian democracy.

In their work *The Alliance and the LWA* Marx and Engels, in discussion of the Nechayev case, were sharply critical of Bakunin's programme and the actions both of the man himself and of his followers. On the subject of his *Revolutionary Catechism*, which is also reflected in *The Possessed*, they wrote "These pan-destructive anarchists, who



There is no need here to argue with Dostoevsky's evaluation of "political" socialism. It is evident that he was quite wrong in his judgement that revolutionary socialism ignores man's spiritual development and ethical principles. The way in which the ideas of scientific communism have been put into practice shows how mistaken he was about the aims of the socialists and their actions.

In the last years of his life Dostoevsky expressed opinions in his essays and articles that could be seen as a form of Russian Christian socialism. Not only did he stress the need to transform life on a moral and religious basis, but he was convinced that this could be done by a people distinguished by its all-embracing compassion. In his *Winter's Notebook* he declared: "The socialism of the Russian people is to be found not in communism or in other simply mechanical forms, it is a people which in the final analysis believes in salvation only through world unity in the name of Christ. That is our Russian socialism."<sup>1</sup>

In his views of the sources of the disharmony which reigned in society and of the ways in which social evil is to be overcome Dostoevsky is in constant contact in one way or another with the many and diverse movements that existed in Russian social thought during the second half of the 19th century, movements which denied the necessity for the growth of capitalist relations in Russia and put forward substantial arguments in support of the idea that she would follow her own path of historical development. Among these movements were the various branches of the Narodniks, the neoslavophiles, the "Pochvenniks", the Theosophists, the Christian socialists and so on. The profound conflicts being played out in Russian reality that reflected the contradictions of the world historical process gave rise both to a keen awareness of the world's imperfections and to attempts to find a social and moral way out of the darkness in which life had long been languishing through utopias and historical romanticism.

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<sup>1</sup> F. M. Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Notebook, 1877, 1880 and 1881*, p. 436 (in Russian).



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Dostoyevsky's views on the way in which life could be reborn were illusory. We should point out that this is all too common in the history of world literature. The views of many of the greatest writers on the subject of the eradication of social evil were just as illusory. But the essential thing is something quite other: the social, cultural and aesthetic significance of their great works. The weaker sides of Dostoyevsky's literary heritage go further than this. They are all too evident, as we have already seen, in the conservatism of his political ideas, in his wavering between protest and meekness and in his rejection of revolutionary socialism.

The champions of social stagnation and of the bourgeois law and order try with all their might to puff up these weaker sides of the great writer's work and make use of them in their attacks upon the progressive ideology of our age. They extol what is called "the Dostoyevsky ethos": the cult of suffering, the unfathomability of the human soul and a religious search. But the true Dostoyevsky and the "Dostoyevsky ethos" are completely separate and different things. The true Dostoyevsky shows an unsurpassed penetration of the most basic strata of human life and of the profundities of man's inner world along with faith in his spiritual and moral potential.

However great the efforts expended by those who defend social stagnation to distort Dostoyevsky's true face, we are left in no doubt at all that the basic mood behind his work is the desire to liberate man from the grip of his individualistic illusions and phantoms and the grasp of the anti-humanist desires that flourish in capitalist society. The true content and objective significance of his creative generalisations lies in the way they discover the close links between an all-powerful egoism, the alienation between people and moral decay on the one hand, and a way of life based on profit, the cult of wealth and man's inhumanity to man on the other.

While rejecting the ideas of revolutionary socialism, Dostoyevsky gave an exceptionally profound account of social contradictions the only way out of which was the total transformation of social relations. The objective meaning of the vivid characters he created lies in the fact that the



of the evil which is inherent in both "patriarchal" and "civilised" capitalism.

These characters are dearer of all to those who constantly experience for themselves the harsh burden of bourgeois "law and order", those who are now seeking the way to bring about change in the principles upon which their society is founded. For Gorky, the hero herald of the revolution, these changes are inseparable from organised struggle by the working classes, inseparable from the idea of putting into practice the ideas of socialism. Gorky's words teach the workers faith in themselves and in the future, they teach courage and striving for useful action based on the fundamental laws by which life develops.

The movement of life in relation to human action was the constant focus of the writer's attention. Gorky wrote at a time when literature, or rather some of its movements, showed clearly the desire to escape from reality and the decisive refusal to study it. Extreme subjectivism and irrationalism were offered as an alternative to the aesthetic study of life and artistic generalisation of the writer's experience. Later, as we know (and this applies to our time as well), reality continued and continues to be ousted from its rightful position as the basis of human existence and the source of all art in the work of many philosophers and writers in the West.

According to the views of many philosophers and writers, the world is something chaotic and formless, a meaningless potpourri of all kind of chance occurrences. There is nothing stable or rational to be found in it, nothing that would seem to follow any laws. Art, these philosophers claim, has nothing to do with reality of any kind, its calling is to disclose the irrationality of existence. Fear of life was clearly expressed in the literature of the turn of the century, and in many of the movements of contemporary art this fear has been embodied with even greater vividness and tension.

In his work Gorky opposed these attempts and discredit reality by stressing his faith in subjectivism he countered with the a the laws by which reality is moved to a young writer Gorky told i

vice













with the content of the epic work, wrote to Gorky. It seems to me that the 'sinew' of the years from the 1890s to the 1920s is not the scepticism of Samgin ('was there a box or wasn't there?') or the unfounded enthusiasm but the subliminal, vital and rebellious force that is depicted in your *Yashin*. For each age is distinguished not by the Samgins, not by the crabs scuttling around in it, not by its rust and clutter but by the life-giving source which pulsates beneath the rubbish and all that is unnecessary in it.

By now the limited and unfounded nature of judgements of this kind is obvious. To compare *Mother* with *The Life of Klim Samgin* and to see the task before art only in the depiction of what is progressive means to misunderstand the essential facets of Gorky's work including his great and penetrating discoveries in the world of property and individualistic outlooks, emotions and aspirations. Although the ideas expressed by Gorky's correspondent were quite common at the time of the writing of *The Life of Klim Samgin*, in the conception of the epic and its realisation were expressed the sharp eye and craftsmanship of a great artist.

In *Kim Senjin* Clark shows us people not only of the past but also of the world that exists to this day depicting them refracted through the prism of a man who, as he is himself convinced, belongs to the spiritual elite in spite of this, however, his distinguishing characteristics are his creative impotence and his fruitless skepticism. The description of all those who are near in spirit to one way or another to the hero of the work, and of those who embody other traits combined with the depiction of historical events and social conflicts merge into a powerful and outstanding social picture. Besides its historical content it has a universal picture. Besides its historical content it has a universal picture. Besides its historical content it has a universal picture. Besides its historical content it has a universal picture.

In a letter to Hermann Hagedorn (which reached him in 1934) Sargis writes of the history of this work as follows:

literature starting with Julius Sargis, going on to the  
 Hagedorn family. In the Hagedorn family the work is



incompatibility of the pretensions, aspirations and vain action of the so-called élite with the great, stormy and complex processes taking place in real life. For this reason his choice of a hero was not only justified, but provided the writer with the opportunity to give us profound artistic generalisations of common and typical phenomena from the life of the society in which he lived. Gorky stressed that *The Life of Klim Samgin* is "the story of a man's attempts to free himself from the violence of reality without changing that reality in any way except in words."

After this, the writer made it his aim to disclose the depths of the social and individual psychology, to show up from within and expose the many forms and versions of the individualist ideology and psychology in relation to the realities of an age of revolution. This is one of the most important facets of the novel *The Life of Klim Samgin*. The depiction of the movement of history and the development of new social forces is interwoven in this epic with a vivid and courageous picture of a time of crisis, ideological disarray and the spiritual degradation of man.

### §

However harsh and dramatic man's downfall, however terrible his aberrations from essential humanity, Gorky did not lose faith in man. His humanism is to be seen not only in his great love of man, but also in the active efforts to help him to rise to better things. It is also to be found in his confidence that the natural course of history was soon to bring man's decisive victory over all that is inhuman.

The writer did not, however, replace the realities of life and human relations with abstract formulae. Olga Bergholtz has written: "He loved people, and not merely humanity, which as we all know is much harder, and this gave his personality an incomparable charm."<sup>1</sup>

This confidence in the invincibility of the human did not bring on a calm and contemplative attitude to evil and to those who bore it. The very essence of Gorky's humanism

<sup>1</sup> *Soviet Literature*, No. 3, 1963, p. 8.



lack of unity in action.

When we are in the same way with different in the  
the of the same that in there are not need to be united  
international of which there are some of the more prominent.

The same point, however, between the people and a more  
the of more internationalism of the same in good and good  
as to men. He saw that the people of the same in the  
of the same and was always working in  
and against in his struggle against them. In the same way  
the love of people found an expression.

Lenin's humanist principles were really reflected in his  
unflinching defence of the idea of equality and friendship  
between nations and his consistent internationalism. From  
and internationalism of Lenin he was completely in accord  
with the latter's view of the natural connection between  
social and national liberation, the development of the nation  
and its national culture and the international character of  
the revolutionary working-class movement. The idea of the  
international unity of working people was magnificently  
expressed in Lenin's work. We have only to recall in this  
connection *Under or Tales of Italy* with the completely  
truthful characters that they portray.

For decades Lenin worked vigorously for the crea-  
tion of the literature and art of many nationalities  
our country to be unified and developed and took an act

art in the drive to popularise their cultures. Even before the 1905 revolution he was striving to acquaint Russian society with the greatest works of Ukrainian, Armenian, Georgian, Yiddish, Latvian and other literatures. These attempts met with fierce resistance but were realised—although not completely—somewhat later, in 1915-1916.

After the October Revolution the part played by Gorky in the formation and the development of our various national literatures grew even more marked. Many talented writers of various nationalities are indebted to Gorky not only for its fruitful influence on their work, but also for his friendly support and his advice, and the formation of Soviet literature as one literature encompassing many nations was a process intimately connected with the name of Gorky.

He gave not only his profound and interested attention but also the unprejudiced evaluation of a well-wisher to the artistic achievements of the family of Soviet literatures and of the other literatures of the world, and to original examples of all forms of national art. Fostering in every way possible the growth of these various unique cultures and literatures Gorky never forsook the overall aims that unite men of different nations in their labours to create a communist society. He often stressed the great significance for Soviet writers of 'mutual understanding of their common interests and their sharing of the road to that goal which history and the strength of their will had set before them.'

The originality of each nation, as Gorky saw it, was in no way a reason for different cultures and literatures to be cut off from one another or for the enmities between any one national culture and those of other peoples. The different cultural values of different nations, as the writer was convinced, do not divide nations but lead to the spiritual enrichment of each one of them through the creative advances that are made by the others.

Gorky saw consciously to it that everything of significance in any one of the national literatures should

<sup>1</sup> M. Gorky, *Collected Works* in 50 volumes, Vol. 24, p. 425, in Russian.

You can see the concrete progress of workers' movement for a single member and place it at the end of a year and see the effect of the movement on the whole group in the next year. The effect is not only in the fact that the workers are more active and more organized but also in the fact that the workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities.

It is not enough to get the workers more active but you must also get them more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities.

In the light of the above the movement of the workers is not only a movement for the workers but also a movement for the whole people. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities.

The workers' movement is not only a movement for the workers but also a movement for the whole people. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities. The workers are more conscious of their own interests and more conscious of their own responsibilities.

The artistic and ideological heritage of Gorky sheds light on many of the complex problems of contemporary culture and not only helps but actively contributes to the consumer

development of this culture. This too is a function of the way in which he combines innovation with the universality of his artistic interests and the generalisations which distinguish his literary work. In 1918 Romain Rolland wrote to Gorky: "You were born at the end of winter and the start of the incipient spring, as the equinox approached. This coincidence symbolises your life, bound up in the end of the old world and the stormy birth of the new. You were like a high arch, joining two worlds, the past and the future, or Russia and the West. I salute this arch, rising in majesty over the road. Those who come after you will still be able to see it for many years to come."<sup>1</sup>

The active role of the work of a great artist which emerges over a period of time is inseparably bound up in changing attitudes to his works. Those who prefer not to change their opinions see every fresh approach to a writer's work as a sign of confusion. On the other hand, those who have made a new reading of his books often see their observations and conclusions as sacrosanct, the first true disclosure of the real meaning of the writer's whole life's work. Both sides are wrong. Time shows forth the new connections between the writer's artistic generalisations and ideas and a changing reality brought into being by a society with newly-developed spiritual needs.

There are obvious changes in the way Gorky is viewed in our day, and the writer's study of the problems of the individual and of social and ethical themes now receives more and more attention. These changes are perhaps most clearly to be seen in the changing ways in which his plays are staged. Productions of *The Petty Bourgeois* at the Leningrad Gorky Drama Theatre and of *The Lower Depths* at Moscow's Sovremennik theatre gave rise to lively debates. These and other productions succeeded in their aims of giving a new reading to Gorky's dramatic works, grasping and asserting their vital connections with the current problems of our own time. The very fact that a new reading of Gorky's plays has

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<sup>1</sup> Gorky's Correspondence with Foreign Writers, Moscow, 1964 (in Russian).



of the founder of socialist realism stands out clearly in its vivid originality and in its inner clarity of purpose.

In the work of Gorky the builders of a socialist culture find support in their aspirations to found a literature and art that will aid the people in their struggle and their labors, enriching their spiritual life. The works of Gorky are an inexhaustible source of life's wisdom, creative endeavor, faith in man and his own creative strength.



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